



AN INTERVIEW WITH **CLIVE BARKER**

SCIENCE FICTION eye

Ellen
DATLOW
& Edward
BRYANT

Gregory
BENFORD

William
GIBSON

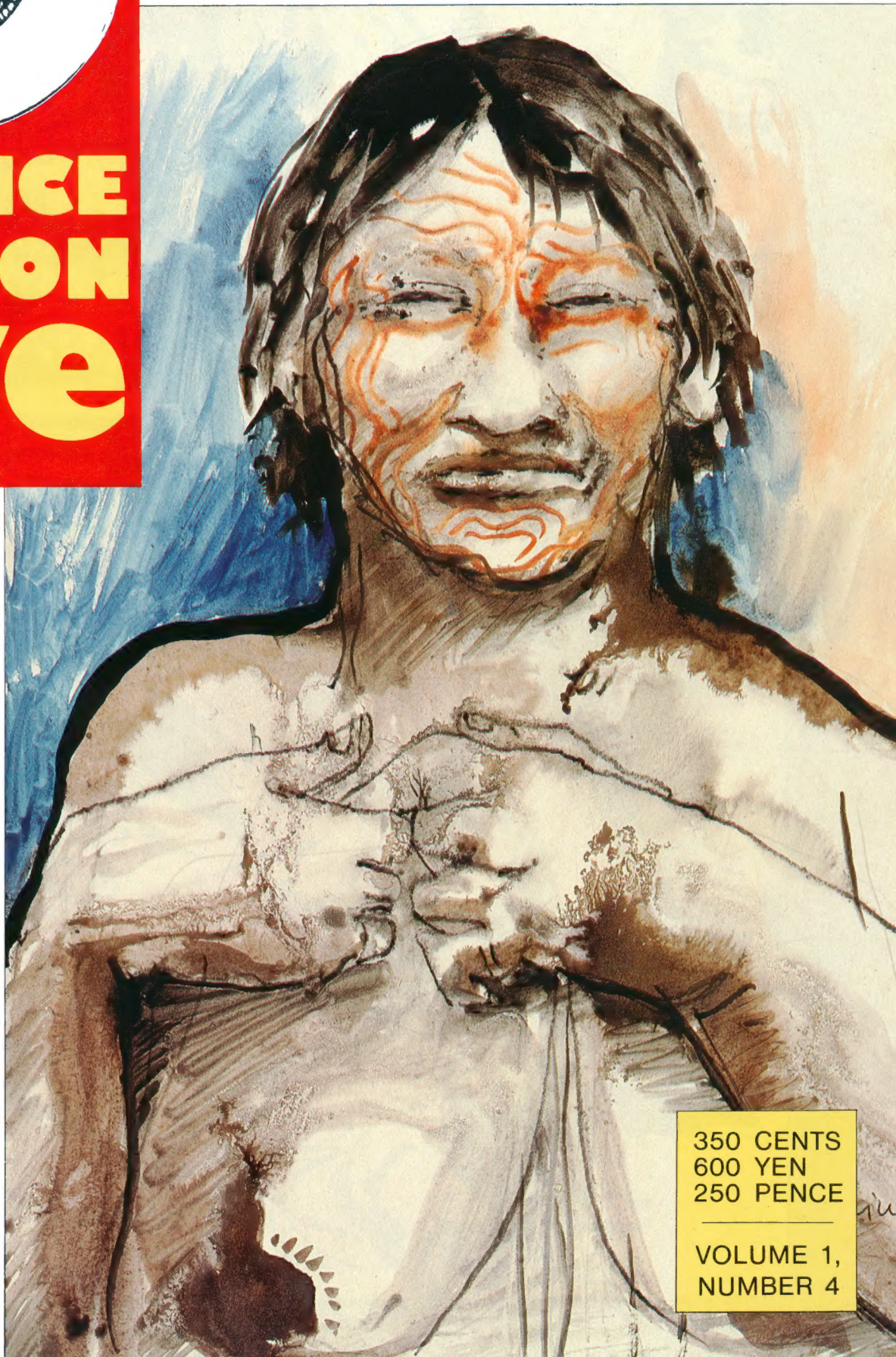
Richard
KADREY

Rudy
RUCKER

Bruce
STERLING

Paul
DI FILIPPO

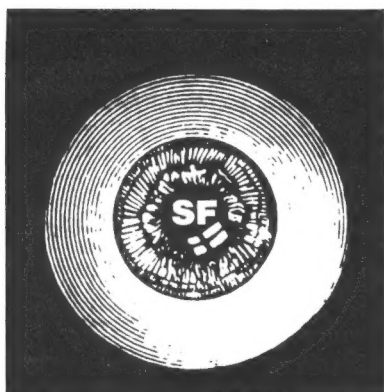
Elizabeth
HAND



350 CENTS
600 YEN
250 PENCE

VOLUME 1,
NUMBER 4



**EDITORS:**

Stephen P. Brown
Daniel J. Steffan

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS:

Takayuki Tatsumi
Elizabeth Hand
Richard A. Lupoff

ART DIRECTOR:

Dante di Stefano

COLUMNISTS:

Bruce Sterling
Paul Di Filippo

CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS:

Steve Stiles, Charles Burns, Clive Barker, Steve Stiles, Richard Thompson, Matt Howarth, and Steve Stiles

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:

Rudy Rucker, Lou Stathis, Richard Kadrey, D. Cooper Vesco, Ed Bryant, Paul Witcover, Lynnewood Gentry, Kathe Koja, Paul King, Constance Ash, and Steve Stiles

OVERSEAS REPRESENTATIVES:

Mari Kotani:
9-11, Tanjo-ga-Oka,
Hiratsuka-shi, Kanagawa-ken
JAPAN 254

Gamma:

c/o The Unlimited Dream Company
91 Chaffinch Road
Beckenham, Kent BR3 4LX
GREAT BRITAIN

SPECIAL THANKS:

George Andrews, Lord of the Semi-Conductors, without whose assistance, the EYE might well have been pounded out on a mimeograph machine. Thanks also to Steve Niles of Arcane Comics for the use of Clive Barker's artwork, and (of course) Common Ground, for help above and beyond the call.

SCIENCE FICTION EYE is published approximately three times a year by the 'Til You Go Blind Cooperative. All submissions and subscriptions are to be sent to: **Science Fiction Eye**, P.O. Box 43244, Washington, DC 20010-9244. Subscription rate: three issues (one year) \$10 USA and \$15 overseas. Six issues (two years) \$18 USA and \$27 overseas. Copyright © 1988, **Science Fiction EYE**. All other rights assigned to the contributors.

CONTENTS

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4

AUGUST, 1988

2 EYEDITORIALS:

Featuring a guest editorial, and Dan on EYE's adolescence.

4 RAPID EYE MOVEMENT:

Keep them coming folks. We like money, but letters more.

9 EYE TO EYE WITH CLIVE BARKER:

A superb radio interview conducted by Richard A. Lupoff.

22 REPORT FROM SILICON VALLEY by Rudy Rucker

Rudy on cellular automata, and human darkness.

26 IN THE WAKE OF THE WAVE by Greg Benford

British SF pondered by one of the US's best-known writers.

32 SOME IMPERTINENT REMARKS TOWARD THE MODULAR CALCULUS, PART ONE by Elizabeth Hand

New EYE-staffer Hand critiques SF's most formidable critic.

40 TOKYO COLLAGE by William Gibson

Prose snapshots of Japan by one who's been there.

44 GRAFFITI'S RAINBOW by Takayuki Tatsumi

The Japanese scene, along with an article by Mari Kotani.

48 YOUNG PERSON'S GUIDE TO CHAOS by Richard Kadrey

A look at the terror toys of the Survival Research Lab.

SRL IN NYC by Lou Stathis

An eyewitness account of an SRL performance.

55 EYE TO EYE WITH ELLEN DATLOW

Writer/critic Ed Bryant queries the editor on editing, et al.

66 CATSCAN: The Agberg Ideology by Bruce Sterling

Bruce tackles Silverberg, and what it means to write that stuff.

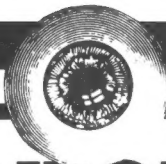
69 TERMINAL LUNCH by Paul Di Filippo

EYE's newest columnist discusses John Crowley's short stories

73 EYETRACKS:

Reviews of novels, SF or otherwise, art books & non-fiction.

COVER BY CLIVE BARKER



The name at the end of this editorial is D. Cooper Vesco. The name at the end of one of the reviews of *Bare-Faced Messiah* in the back pages, and one of the letters in this issue are also D. Cooper Vesco. They are all three different people. Nor are they either of the editors of this magazine. Due to the vindictive nature of the Scientologists, we have found that there are many SF people with strong and eloquent opinions on the subject who would rather not have the Scientologists pestering them. Thus, although we have been stung in the past by pseudonymous criticism, and have vowed not to indulge in such things in our magazine, we have decided to make an exception in this one specialized case.

We will use the Vesco name for the sole purpose of protecting the privacy of people interested in speaking out on the subject of Scientology, Bridge Publications, Writers or Artists of the Future, and any other related activity.

The guest editorial which follows states opinions with which we are in full agreement. But we are open to response on this from anyone out there who cares to. The Vesco name can also be applied to those who wish to disagree as well as agree. Of course, if a correspondent wishes to retain their name, he or she is free to do so. If you send us material under your own name, we will guarantee your anonymity.

In a related matter, *SF EYE* is hunting for someone who is neither an idiot nor a Scientologist who has actually read all ten books of the Hubbard dekology. We would like an article or interview describing the structure of these books. If you wish, you may use the Vesco name for this. —spb

SCIENTOLOGY AND SCIENCE FICTION

by D. Cooper Vesco

Many science-fiction people have a broad-minded and essentially trusting attitude when dealing with other people whose beliefs are somewhat "off center." Many of us were made to feel like misfits with weird ideas, in our childhoods, so we're reluctant to inflict the same kind of punishment on anyone else. This, I think, explains why the promotion of Hubbard's science fiction, and

EYEDITORIALS



ILLUSTRATION BY CLIVE BARKER

By Brown & Steffan

the tie-ins with Writers of the Future, has been received with such good-natured tolerance.

If science-fiction people understood exactly how strange Scientologists are, however, and if they grasped the implications that emerge from this, they might think again.

First one must realize that Scientologists seriously believe ideas that sound to us like bad science fiction—ininitely more ridiculous than UFO stories. It is standard Scientology practice to try to liberate the trainee's soul, or Thetan, from an accumulation of hangups, or engrams, that impair a person's ability to function. So far, so good; but many of these engrams supposedly have their origins in past lives. According to the teachings of L. Ron Hubbard, your Thetan, and mine, were alive millions of years ago on other planets, where they resided in alien civilizations that bear surprising resemblance to the kind of thing one used to read in 1930s and 1940s pulp magazines. Part of the point of removing all engrams is to free the Thetan, so it becomes an Operating Thetan, and thus regains some of the superpowers that it once lost.

Fred Harris, the public-relations man who has organized a lot of the publicity for Hubbard's science fiction and for the Writers of the Future enterprise, seems a very personable, friendly, and rational man. One reason he has succeeded so well at befriending science-fiction professionals, and getting them to participate in projects whose sole purpose seems to be increasing Hubbard's reputation (and hence attracting new converts to Scientology), is that Fred seems a nice guy and many science-fiction people are too naive and trusting to realize that Fred is *trained* to seem a nice guy. This, after all, is what public relations is all about.

We should remember, however, that it is highly unlikely for Fred to be a non-Scientologist, bearing in mind the position of authority that he occupies. Some ex-Scientologists have said

in fact that Fred has been a figure in Scientology for at least ten years. This means, without any possible doubt, he believes not only in reincarnation but in his ability to communicate directly with his billion-year-old Thetan.

You might feel this doesn't matter; that there are many people with screwy ideas, and that's their own affair. Unfortunately, it's not quite so simple. Anyone who sincerely believes he has access to higher powers is going to have elitist attitudes (it's worth noting that the unofficial Scientology word for non-Scientologists is "wogs"). Secondly, the believer is going to display something close to reverence for the guru who opened up this whole new vision of the universe.

This means, to Fred Harris and any Scientology true believer, L. Ron Hubbard was not just a good storyteller, not just a visionary, but a genius—possibly, the greatest genius in the history of humanity. Put yourself in their position: if someone showed *you* how to transcend everyday reality, have out-of-body experiences, and communicate with a billion-year-old entity that had travelled freely through the galaxy, and if you

actually *believed* these revelations, you would have to feel awe and gratitude toward the seer who had opened this up for you.

If you doubt that Scientologists feel this way about Hubbard, just try chatting to them about the man. Harris himself, despite his training as a bland PR man, cannot restrain a kind of worshipful tone when he talks about Hubbard. To a Scientologist, Hubbard has provided a kind of immortality.

We now see one reason they are willing to spend so much money promoting Hubbard—not just to further the aims of Scientology (though that is certainly important) but to pay homage to their revered hero.

So far, this still sounds relatively harmless. There is a dark side to all of this, however, which emerges as soon as someone is seen to be opposed to Scientology, or disrespectful toward Hubbard.

Here you are, a Scientologist, believing that Hubbard was history's greatest genius. You are confronted with a non-Scientologist, an ignorant "wog," poking fun at this outlook. From your perspective, you are being confronted with blasphemy. Worse, you feel threatened. After all, there are more non-Scientologists than Scientologists in the world. The movement is a minority, and it has been persecuted in many countries. Hubbard (whom you revere) taught that the only way to defend yourself is by attack. You are thus fighting for the survival of your beliefs, fighting to preserve the reputation of your genius-guru, and fighting to eradicate ignorance among nonbelievers. The expressed aim of Scientology is to bring about world peace (it's right there on their stationary, and in their magazines). You believe it can provide not only enlightenment, but immortality. You believe it is being threatened by unenlightened people who want to wipe out this glorious future for humanity. You have been told by your guru (in many of his official instructions to his followers) that any tactics, fair or foul, are legitimate when dealing with people who mean harm to Scientology.

Those who "mean harm" include many government organizations, which is why Operation Snow White apparently roused no

qualms among Scientologists who took jobs with the IRS and the FBI purely for the purpose of stealing Scientology-related documents from these agencies.

Those who "mean harm" also include people who stay with Scientology for a while, then decide to opt out. They are classified (often) as Suppressives—people who are so retrogressive and negative that they turn against the Church that tried to bring them ultimate enlightenment.

You may feel that the statements I have made are too simplistic, or involve exaggerations. In that case, I suggest you read some Scientology publications, and pay special attention to pronouncements by L. Ron Hubbard, dealing with tactics that should be used against Suppressives.

You might also consider the case of Paulette Cooper, who committed the "crime" of writing a book that portrayed Scientology unflatteringly. FBI documents and court transcripts show that some over-zealous Scientologists deliberately framed Cooper for a crime that she never committed and knew nothing about. She was close to serving a jail term, until the FBI uncovered evidence proving that there was a Scientology plot against her. She was subsequently awarded substantial damages.

This is not trivial. This is not the behavior of a group that merely happens to have some quirky ideas.

Any time you buy an L. Ron Hubbard novel, or any time you lend support to Writers of the Future (e.g. by purchasing one of their anthologies, or attending a workshop), you are cooperating with people who are unstable and potentially dangerous, in my opinion. The idea that Hubbard's science fiction, and its promotion, exists quite separately from Scientology is a sophistry. The fiction promotes his name. The writing contests sanitize his reputation.

I urge people to adopt a policy of noninvolvement with any enterprise that has anything to do with L. Ron Hubbard. Scientologists should certainly be free to believe anything they want; but we should avoid giving them any extra resources to impose their beliefs on others and punish their "enemies" who dare to disagree with them. ●

THE CHILD BECOMES THE MAN by Dan Steffan

Science Fiction EYE completed a cycle last issue and turns an important corner with this one. The magazine has moved into its adolescence having, hopefully, learned from the traumas of its childhood.

The EYE started out as a casual hobby, but quickly became larger and more complicated than we ever imagined it would. We had no idea how hungry you all were for our kind of dinner party. Suddenly Steve and I found ourselves running a small business—the transition has been somewhat painful. Though pleasantly surprised at the magazine's reception, we found we had to abandon our living room offices.

Yeah, this means that SF EYE grows the fuck up.

The transition is still only half complete, but by 1989 we should be a *real* company. This means coming out on time—thanks, Gardner, for your kind words—and other good stuff like that. We always thought that this was a project that needed to be done, but we didn't realize how much responsibility it would bring with it. We now have no choice but to get serious.

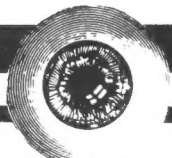
We're going to get our asses in gear and we'd like you to do the same. Renew your subscriptions and *for god's sake* write us some letters of comment. That pipeline is a vital link in SF EYE's armor—with your letters we can become INVINCIBLE, WE CAN BANISH ALL ELVES AND UNICORNS FOREVER, WHY, WE CAN EVEN . . .

Well, maybe we won't get *that* serious.

POSTAL UPDATE: Our tales of Mailroom Woe have continued since last we met. The entire experience has left a gnawing feeling in the pit of my stomach.

I arrived at the PO to check our box recently, and was confronted with a sign saying: "Closed because of Infestation," and instructions to go a half mile away to get our mail. The Postal Jockey behind the counter explained to me that the rats had been discovered *eating* the mail.

I looked at her wistfully and said, "So what else is new?" ●



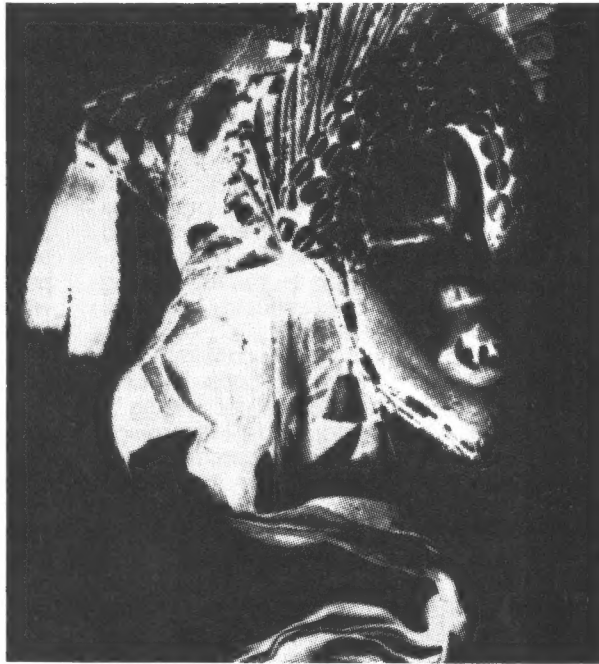
CHARLES PLATT
New York, NY

Delany's presumption (masquerading as a deduction) that Gibson was influenced by LeGuin and Russ, simply because his fiction features plucky, dangerous female characters, is quite bizarre and undermines his severe pretensions as a critic, so painfully evident throughout his interview in your third issue. His assertion (totally unsupported by any argument, logic, or examples) that "there wouldn't be any cyberpunk" without Russ, LeGuin, McIntyre, and Vinge is even more bizarre. This is a classic example of inferring backward from one's ideology to a conclusion that is ideologically correct from the critic's perspective, while having absolutely no links with the real essence of the work under discussion. Delany, a tiresome proponent of ideologically feminism, finds characters that are superficially similar in two schools of writing, one of which preceded the other in time. Immediately, the link is assumed, the conclusion is reached: one must have influenced the other. For this one receives tenure and \$70,000 a year?

Gibson has stated publicly his influences where his knife-fingered, mirror-eyed character is concerned. They had more to do with MTV and modern fashion than with fantasy novelists working ten years ago. If Delany were more connected with current popular culture, he might see this. He might also note the possibility that a science-fiction writer can be influenced by writers outside the field. Femme fatales are hardly a new invention, after all; it would make better sense to suggest that Gibson was influenced, say, by Brigid O'Shaughnessy in Dashiell Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon* (though personally I think this would be equally specious, and the whole business of inferring links between forms of fiction is idle speculation at best).

I find more speciousness (although of a far more entertaining

RAPID EYE MOVEMENT



Letters of Comment

type) in Bruce Sterling's sort-of-defense of John Updike. Bruce, as usual, argues selectively: he makes his points by mentioning the small amount of evidence that supports his wild claims, while carefully omitting the stuff that wouldn't make such good sense. Fair enough; most critics do the same thing. But they don't do it so consciously, or leave out so much. To take a point at random: it seems odd to me that Bruce should become an apologist for Updike's humanist sensibilities, while remaining a trenchant critic of the writers already at work in our field who show equal concern, and perhaps comparable stylistic ability, when it comes to portraying people drawn from the real world. Nancy Kress, for instance, has written stories with human insight; and Bruce hates them. Moreover, she writes without the New England Protestant slant that he finds offensive in Updike; and she has

considerably more faith in modern technology. Would it be possible for Mr. Sterling to be not only internally consistent (within one piece of critical writing) but externally consistent also (reconciling the paradoxes and contradictions that come to light when one compares several pieces of his criticism written at different times)? The result would be interesting, although it might be a bit of a strain.

While it is true that inferring links between various authors and literary movements is idle speculation, it is also true that no one writes in a vacuum. Gibson, at his best, is a superb mirror of the fringes of modern Western culture. But that culture is only marginally influenced, if at all, by the winds of fashion in SF. While he it is possible that he was influenced to some degree by LeGuin, Russ, et al.—he was most certainly influenced by the forces of feminism in the culture at large which have so radically altered the image of the female in today's fiction, movies, art, etc. I doubt it was through any more conscious effort than his evocation of cyberspace was a conscious extrapolation of modern computer technology. He just soaks it all up and puts it back out. One of the secrets of his success is his superbly tuned bullshit detector. Even when his fiction is "wrong" in the most literal sense, it always feels right. You might call him an impressionistic realist.

Bruce is a hyper-realist, and will only grudgingly admit the validity of anything so ephemeral as an "impression," though this does not stop him from some fine moments of sheer illogical humanity in his own fiction. It is perhaps unfair to castigate him for not addressing Nancy Kress in a column devoted to Updike. There is only so much ground one can cover in a couple of pages of a magazine (even pages as large as the ones in our last issue). There are innumerable SF writers with varying degrees of skill at illuminating the human condition, none of who were the subject of Bruce's column (but any of whom could be the subject of his next). Besides, today's Bruce isn't yesterday's Bruce—what he has said in the past isn't necessarily what he believes in the present. Those who have followed his fiction are aware of his fresh insight and approach in each new story.

CONSTANCE ASH
New York, NY

The interview with Delany was a smart completion to the "first cycle" of the **SF EYE** which has given thought and space to the Gibson Corps—most entertainingly and controversially too. Back a couple-three years ago, John Douglas (Avon) and Charles Platt cross-examined a novice novelist as to just what science fiction was read by her. "Samuel Delany is probably the most important writer, category or otherwise, that the US has produced in our generation," she said. Folks disagreed. They hit the ceiling when she suggested that much of what made the current crop of *Ace Specials* so exciting had been pioneered by Delany, and still hadn't dated.

Second thing—in the story by Paul Di Filippo, Carr's "nimble fingers nudge the slide controls on the crackle-finished main console up and down, like the delicate digits of a record producer seeking to obtain the proper sound mix for some merry pop melody." Negative. The *producer* most often is the label's stooge (salary paid out of the artist(s)' side of the budget) that signs the checks. The *engineer* runs the pots and faders. There are exceptions on occasion, but very, very seldom does the producer have any idea what to do with the board, and certainly doesn't know how to mix and set up the cords.

Now, if only we could get Delany into a recording studio . . .

MICHAEL A. ARMSTRONG
Anchorage, AL

Lewis Shiner says in his letter in **EYE** #3 that issue #1 is "the easiest way yet to explain the entire phenomenon [c'punk] to somebody from, say, Mars." I should note that selected photocopied hunks of #1 (done under the auspices of the educational provisions of the copyright laws, of course) were used for exactly that purpose, i.e., to explain the literary context of Mr. William Gibson's *Neuromancer* in a course on SF I taught last fall at the University of Alaska Anchorage (yes, Mr. Shiner, a bit like Mars, in fact). If I teach the course again I'll just order lots of back copies, okay? Very valuable articles.

What I enjoy most about **EYE**

(and why I'll subscribe to your semi-prozine and not others) is your insistence on analyzing the text of SF, and not just such usual stuff as plot. The Tatsumi interview with Samuel R. Delany, for instance, looks at a lot of new and old SF in a way that no one else I know of is doing.

Despite some wonderful reviews of my own work (to take a for instance, not to be too egotistical here), I find it frustrating that too often what I get is a capsule description of the book and little analysis of the way I put the words together, the subtext, the allegories, the metaphors . . . Am I expecting too much? I know that crap is in there because I try to pay attention to such things (even though some aesthetic theories say writers should not intend to); I know it's there because I re-read my stuff and it surprises me. Is this too self-indulgent? Well, the way Chip talks, I know *someone* out there is capable of this sort of criticism. Could you kindasorta encourage that? Good.

You know, I have this feeling that SF is making this big split and a lot of the writers—I don't know who, but I think they'll be following the example of our favorite faggot uncle, as Chip describes himself—are going to go off to this place outside the ghetto that's sort of like the ghetto, only they'll get better advances and occasionally be reviewed like Lem and Atwood and Ballard novels get reviewed in the *New York Times Book Review*. (I mean, a review of *The Day of Creation* by Delany in the NYTBR not in the genre column. Shit!) And I think **EYE**'s going to be a force in that direction. I hope.

P.S. We know about Shepard's shoes. Why does Delany wear a stop watch?

Chip's stopwatch is just jewelry. Time is, after all, merely a helix of semi-pre-cious stones.

JOHN SHIRLEY
Thousand Oaks, CA

I was surprised and dismayed to read Lucius Shepard's heinous attack on Rob Hardin in your insidious little pamphlet on the Kessel/Gibson/Hardin tempest in a teapot . . . indeed, a tempest in a teaspoon . . . I mean, really, Lucius over-reacted. He got all het up about something. What, I'm not

sure.

But let me herewith state for the record that Rob Hardin is an excellent writer, a fine stylist—not the stuffy, stumbling snob Shepard pretended he was—and a man of, clearly, considerable scholarly insight. Hardin is a fine poet, too, as witnessed by the poetry he's published in an upcoming *Mississippi Review* (that's the special cyberpunk issue, by the way. Should be out by the time this gets into print). Also, Shepard made some catty remarks about what he assumed to be Hardin's style of music, though he's never heard Hardin play. Not even one note. And that was dirty pool, Lucius. Don't criticize a man's art—indeed, his livelihood—without having the remotest idea as to how it's executed. Not fair. Actually, Hardin isn't the cold, anal sort of fusion player Shepard suggested he might be—Hardin is one of the most sought after rock'n'roll keyboardists in New York. He's a professional session man, composer, lyricist, and singer. He's written songs for many recording artists, and now has a deal for his own band. A rock band. And he's soulful at all of those undertakings. Ballsy. Lyrical. And inhumanly skillful. In fact, Rob Hardin has played with Public Image, Ltd, a band that hardly fits in with Shepard's view of Rob's musical style.

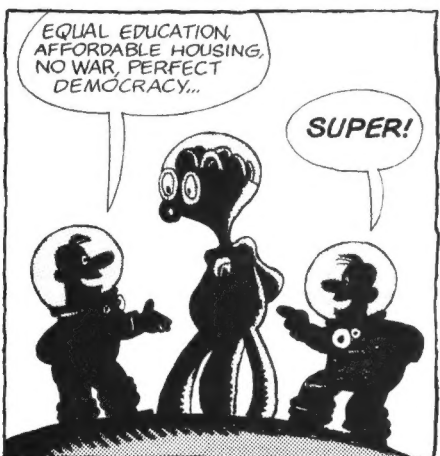
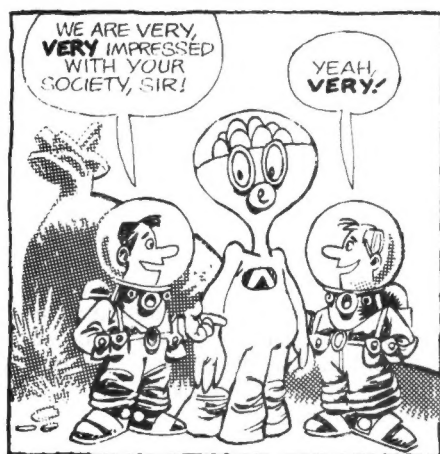
Shepard is one of the best SF writers the field has ever known, is indeed one of the best writers in the USA in any genre, but he's done Hardin wrong. Shepard's technique here was outright ridicule, blowing raspberries from the balcony. It lacked class. It was all froth and no beer. Nothing wrong with Hardin's scholarship, logic, style, or personality.

And Hardin was entirely right about Kessel's attack on Gibson and C-punk.

Anyone who wants to order copies of the *Mississippi Review* cyberpunk issue should write to:

Rie Fortenberry, MISSISSIPPI REVIEW
Center for Writers
Southern Station, Box 5144
Hattiesburg, MS 39406

costs \$6.50, including postage. Ask for "The Desert of the Real: The Cyberpunk Controversy." Has fiction in it by Gibson, your truly, Rudy Rucker, and many others; has essays and interviews; has



Hardin's poetry.

As I'm going off into other artistic directions, I probably won't be publishing SF after the third *Eclipse* book, and my satirical novel *The Black Hole of Carcosa*, at least for a while, but my best wishes go out to everyone reading *SF EYE*.

John's last paragraph will explain why you haven't seen the follow-up to his *Stelarc* article—which was intended as the first part of a three-part series. John has decided to toil in vineyards other than those of SF. We wish him all the best of luck, and hope to hear from them in these pages in some capacity soon.

MICHAEL R.A. COBLEY Glasgow, Scotland

Isn't it time we had a little clarity in this question about labels, tags, etc? They are *not* inherently dangerous or damaging, the words in themselves do not create subgenre/ghetto walls. Rather it is the writers' and readers' psychological response to those words that create the patterns and attitudes on which the machinery of bottom-line publishing battens and feeds.

I suggest that the argument about whether or not to tear up our cyberspace decal-stickers and recycle our mirrorshades into surf-board wingmirrors is, in the context of public perceptions of SF, irrelevant. The problem is not with whatever new groupings appear or with their names: the cry "Destroy all labels! Smash all genres!" is actually the worst of action. It is because society and our problems (including those about art and creativity) are considerably more complex than they were even 50 years ago, that we need as many different viewpoints as we can get.

To quote T. S. Eliot: "A national culture, if it is to flourish, should be a constellation of cultures, the constituents of which, benefitting each other, benefit the whole."—and: "... a society is in disintegration when there is a lack of contact between people of different areas of activity—between the political, the scientific, the artistic, the philosophical and the religious minds. This separation cannot be repaired merely by public organization..."

Which is the corollary. As well as a multiplicity of cultures, a cross-fertilization is essential to prevent stagnancy. I believe this

holds for SF too. Quoting Eliot (just once more!): "... the possibility of each literature renewing itself, proceeding to new creative activity, making new discoveries in the use of words, depends on two things. First, its ability to receive and assimilate influences from abroad. Second, its ability to go back and learn from its sources."

So when you let go with all fury at labels and tagnames, it's little more than a waste of energy. It might make a difference if you focussed an attack on the people responsible for perpetuating SF's shitty public profile. Like the ones who wrap books in semi-fascist power symbology and cute teen sub-porn that are nothing but Pavlovian trigger images. Pull *their* covers, give us the names! Expose them and their sleazy reverence for money.

After that, there's always the creative typists who churn out the trash...

My motive for that semi-whimsical imperative, "Destroy all labels!" was one of total agreement with your position. The creation of labels, and the attendant dogma, is one of narrowing of focus. Hell, I think everyone should read and be influenced by everyone else simultaneously. Nature has shown that diversity, rather than homogeneity results. The isolation of a population on, say, a remote island (or within the confines of a specific label) stifles difference and oversimplifies the ecology. If one believes too strongly in a label, then one must also begin to ignore those outside the label on the basis of "ideological incorrectness" rather than a failure of vision or talent. Besides, when was the last time T.S. Eliot tried to get a story published in *Asimov's*? What does he know about the travails of selling a fantasy trilogy?

D. COOPER VESCO New Orleans, LA

Congratulations on yet another step in the evolutionary process. I found the format of *SF EYE* #3 something of a surprise, to say the least. Enjoyed the (gasp!) fiction, especially the excerpt from Shirley's *A Splendid Chaos*. I was equally pleased to see, at long last, someone come out against the Scientologists. I believe L. Ron Hubbard's empire may turn out to be an even bigger nest of pay-offs and compromised interests than Moon's delightful circus.

I worked for Waldenbooks for

COMIC STRIP BY STEVE STILES

over a year (I realize the dangers inherent in something like this, so feel free to replace "Waldenbooks" with "Hellplaza Books") During my 16 months working as a lowly peon, I dealt with the shipping invoices and other flotsam of the book biz. The reason Hubbard's execrable drekology made the Top Ten is that Waldenbooks was under standing orders from Bridge Publications to keep the hardbacks on a permanent 35% discount! Hell, who wouldn't be tempted to buy a \$19.95 hardback priced at \$11.95? If you're practically giving the damn things away, it's bound to influence sales! I also noticed that the 35% discount was limited to Waldenbooks. Plus, only Waldenbooks carries *Dianetics* on its shelves. Oh, you can get it from B. Dalton, but you have to special order it. *Dianetics* is always available from Waldenbooks, and is on the Automatic Reorder Lists, which means every time they sell a copy of *Dianetics* the computer automatically reorders it from the main warehouse. This led me to believe that Waldenbooks has more to do with Bridge Publications than just selling their books. The majority shareholder in Waldenbooks (at least until the time I left) was K-Mart, but they weren't the only shareholder. I got sick of having to smile and make non-commentable comments while I sold people their *Dianetics* and the latest in the ongoing drekology. It might come as some solace that while we sold anywhere from 10 to 35 *Dianetics* a week ("m looking for that book I seen on TV. Had a volcano.") I sold only one copy of *Self-Analysis* the whole time I worked there. Once bitten, twice shy, I suppose.

But fandom needs to make a serious attempt to expel these Jim Jones clones. (I tend to think of them as moral kidney stones.) They will not go away until their beloved *fuhrer* gets a posthumous Hugo, so it's up to fandom to discourage their participation in Worldcon. (They're despised by the ABA Convention, as it is). Unfortunately, large lumps of no-questions-asked cash is pretty hard for a struggling Worldcon Committee to ignore. Look at the Brighton fiasco. I'm amazed that NOW hasn't boycotted the damn *Mission Earth* crap. Perhaps they ignore lowly genre fiction, preferring the likes of Norman Mailer.

What disturbs me is that, now it's in paperback, the drekology is bound to end up in the hands of easily influenced teenagers (and SF fans). If we're not careful there'll be rape therapy fandom to go along with the John Norman b&d fandom.

Read our guest editorial. It's not the silly ideas that makes the Scientologists into "moral kidney stones." It's their belligerent intolerance of anyone else's ideas, or of any criticism. Were it not for this one ethical failing of theirs, all else would be funny, pathetic, but tolerable. After all, SF is an veritable Ellis Island for people with peculiar notions. Also, having worked in a bookstore myself, I know that any book that sells at the rate of 10 to 35 copies a week will be on automatic reorder, regardless of the inanity of the content. The questions is: who are these 10 to 35 people? The dark rumors keep surfacing about cadre Scientologists given quotas of books to buy or cause to be sold, to jack them onto the lists. Walden probably has a lot to answer for here, but simply stocking a fast-moving item isn't one of them.

One of the major weapons in the Scientologist well-stocked arsenal is large piles of cash. It is a weapon virtually impossible to resist. It is so easy to say, "Take the money and run." They want you to do that. As Bruce Sterling once said: "Owning 15 million dollars is the functional equivalent of owning a tactical nuke."

ALAN WEXELBLAT Austin, TX

I would like to comment on John Shirley's review of *Stelarc* ("Stelarc and the New Reality"—EYE #2). It is nice to see that Shirley has such a positive attitude towards emerging new technologies, but as someone who makes his daily living working close to the technological edge (in the computer field), I think Shirley needs a dose of reality.

For example, he states that "Parallel Processing promises—along with Nanotechnology—to make artificial intelligence a reality. I wish it were that easy! These technologies attack the easy end of the AI problem—small and fast machines. The really hard problem—how to get these machines to do anything sensible—is not any further solved with these technologies than without.

He also quotes Caltech's Leroy Hood who says that "In the next twenty years we'll learn more than in the last two thousand." While

1ST NIGHT: THE BAD MORNING AND DISASTEROUS AFTERNOON HAVE THROWN US OFF SCHEDULE AS WE SLOG MONOTONOUSLY THROUGH YET ANOTHER REEKING BOG...



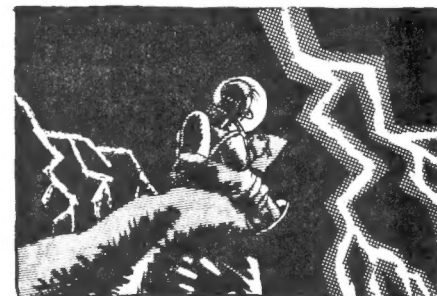
2ND NIGHT: THE LOW HUMIDITY AT SUCH HIGH ALTITUDES SAPS THE BODY OF FLUIDS AT AN ALARMING RATE. WE BOTH KNOW WE WILL NEED EVERY PHYSICAL RESOURCE WE CAN MUSTER...



3RD NIGHT: DRIFTING METHANE SNOWS HAVE COMPRESSED THE SIDES OF OUR TINY TENT. WE ARE TRYING TO SLEEP AMID CHAOS AS THE SHRILL WIND RELENTLESSLY LASHES THE CREST OF OUR RIDGE...



4TH NIGHT: FRANK'S IN THE CREVICE AGAIN, THE SECOND STAMPEDE TOOK MOST OF OUR SUPPLIES, OUR GUIDE DISAPPEARED LAUGHING, AND HOW I CAN KEEP HOLDING A PEN WITH THIS PAPER CUT I'LL NEVER KNOW...



COMIC STRIP BY STEVE STILES

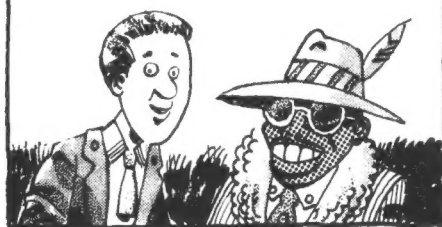
WE'RE HERE TO INTERVIEW
THAT INCREASINGLY RARE
SUBGROUP IN 21ST CENTURY
AMERICA®--THE FULLY
EMPLOYED WORKER.



AS YOU VIEWERS KNOW,
AUTOMATION IN THE WORKPLACE,
THE FACTORIES, THE FARMS, ETC.,
DID MUCH TO PHASE OUT THE
ONCE POWERFUL "BLUE COLLAR"
WORKER IN THE LATE
20TH CENTURY...



...WHILE THE HOME COMPUTER
REVOLUTION DID MUCH TO REPLACE
CLERICAL AND OTHER OFFICE
WORKERS, LOW TO MID MANAGEMENT,
FREELANCERS, ETC., ETC., WITH
LOWER WAGE WORKERS IN TAIWAN,
SOUTH KOREA, AND ETHIOPIA...



...SO THAT TODAY MOST
OF US IN AMERICA™
ARE BONDED CORPORATE
INDENTURED SERVANTS.
(NOT THAT WE'RE
COMPLAINING!) BUT
YOU SIR-- WHAT
DO YOU DO?



Mr. Hood may be exaggerating a bit, he does bring up a valid point: available information is multiplying at an astonishing rate. But there's a world of difference between information and knowledge. Remember, too, that by most measures the rates of literacy and expertise (especially scientific and technical literacy) are dropping in America. An encyclopedia (or fancy multi-media hypertext system) doesn't do any good if you can't read.

Lastly, he points out that "culture is a level of consensual reality and a new reality is burgeoning around us." Very true. But let's try not to forget that this new reality includes record numbers of people living in poverty or on the street. "Movement" writers seem to pride themselves on writing works that strongly impact the reader. Shirley would do well to remember that technology is a double-edged sword and we can easily cut ourselves as we seek to cut a new path.

It always takes a long time for the artisans to learn how to really use a new tool, but every new tool attracts clusters of artisans who immediately begin trying. Shirley was pointing out that entire new toolsheds are suddenly becoming available. Artisans, such as, perhaps, yourself, are beginning to work with them, and the results will be long in coming after much hard work. But without the tools themselves, nothing new would be made. It is a smokescreen to point out the attendant social problems in today's society. Perhaps these new tools will help us solve these problems. God knows, nothing else seems to have worked so far.

ELISABETH VONARBURG
Chicoutimi, Canada

SF EYE #3 is a very unwieldy product, as far as dimensions are concerned, but it is a juicy one. I haven't had time to read all the stories yet; I like the Watson one, even if it is not as mind-boggling as what he usually does. The Shirley one . . . Huh, very nicely Bosch-esque, but a whole novel like that, I am not sure I would be up to it. I could not go through the first story—I'll have to get back to it and try again, when I am less exhausted by con-organizing (BOREAL, Quebecer SF Con [which has already occurred, on June 16-19—sorry, Elisabeth, we just couldn't publish fast enough for you]). Anyhow, the first

comment which comes to my mind after reading those first three stories is "Don't become an *Interzone* clone, please." They do that kind of thing pretty well, I am not sure redundancy is appropriate right now . . . Or maybe it is, what do I know? An American *Interzone*, Hummm . . .

The Delany interview is very Delanyesque—I couldn't help but smile a little now and then (affectionately, not matronizingly . . .). But as far as I am concerned, he hits right on the button with his psychoanalytical approach to CBPK—which is not, I hurry to say, "the only good" approach, the only good reading (of CBPKs or others, for that matter). While writing my PhD thesis on (my own) "creative writing," I found more or less the same kind of substratum (?) in my own writing. I found it in quite a lot of other SF writers' stuff, too—which leads me to speculate that it might very well be one ("one," take note) of the fundamental drives in SF or literature as a whole.

I really don't think you have to worry about SF EYE turning *Interzone*-ish. We are two very different breeds of magazine. We are primarily a non-fiction publication with occasional dabbles into fiction (our third issue was uncharacteristic). IZ concentrates on fiction with the odd dabble into essays and interviews. You might say that the two magazines are mirror images of each other.

If the fiction in EYE #3 seemed too *Interzone* influenced, we can only say thanks. We could do worse.

Now, some of you are *still* writing to us at our old address. After a minor skirmish with the forces of Postal Fear, we have a new P.O. Box. This is important, so please pay attention. Besides, the P.O. will stop forwarding our mail before too long.

Please address all correspondence to:

SCIENCE FICTION EYE
P.O. Box 43244
Washington, DC
20010-93244

COMIC STRIP BY STEVE STILES

eyeTOeye

An Interview With **CLIVE BARKER**



ILLUSTRATION BY RICHARD THOMPSON

Clive Barker walked into the studios of radio station KPFA accompanied by a publicity rep hired by his publisher. KPFA is a low-budget, listener-supported station, and its studios are modest to say the least.

My partners, Richard Wolinsky and Lawrence Davidson, and I chatted with Barker for a few minutes before we began taping. He'd been on tour for some weeks, and was getting interview-weary. But there was more to it than that—he seemed to be interviewer-wary.

One possible reason for that: it's amazing how many interviewers wing it. They don't read the author's books, but instead rely on crib-sheets provided by the publishers, containing canned questions to which the author is equally primed to provide canned responses. That can get pretty deadly after a while.

As Barker became aware that Wolinsky and Davidson and I knew both his own works and the background and nature of the horror/fantasy/SF field, he became more and more relaxed, more and more forthcoming in his answers.

But only after we'd finished an outstanding session of taping did he reveal the real reason for his initial wariness. Earlier on the tour he'd been booked onto call-in shows and been harassed and abused by callers—and sometimes by broadcast hosts!—who consider his books blasphemous and Barker himself little short of the Antichrist!

I told him I thought that should have been fun. But he said he thought I'd change my mind if I had to take that kind of abuse.

Probably he's right.

—Richard A. Lupoff

RICHARD WOLINSKY: *Your basic focus seems to be on horror. Why?*

CLIVE BARKER: My basic focus has been on horror, until *Weave-world*, which I don't define as a horror novel at all. But, yes, I think that's exactly right. The horror genre generally offers far more possibilities than its detractors allow. It allows you to talk about death, insanity, sexual obsession, the failure of social systems, the destruction of the nuclear family. You can subvert the status quo on a page by

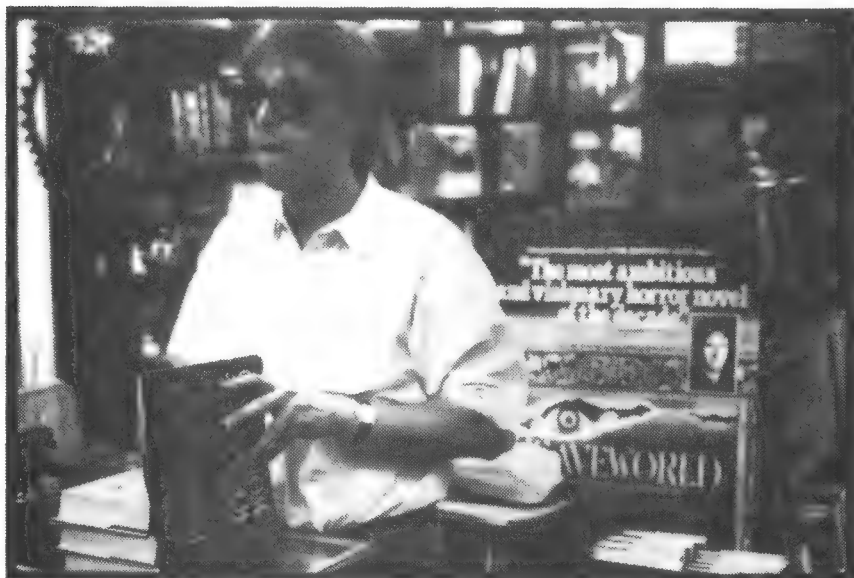


PHOTO BY GUION WYLER

page basis, all the kind of stuff that really turns me on, in other words. And you can do that in a format which is very accessible, and people will pick up at their supermarket or at their airport or at their bookstore, and maybe not even realize the subtext. But it is there, it is part of the texture of what's being presented. I like that sense that the thing can work on several levels.

And I also like, in a curious kind of way, that you can just get on with having the relationship which is really important, that is the relationship with the reader. This is perverse, perhaps, because it's certainly looked down upon critically, if not ignored. I don't write for critics. It wouldn't be worth it anyway, because most critics would tend to ignore this kind of fiction. In some ways being ignored by critics is a sacred condition. It means that there is no sense that you are trying to appeal to a bunch of individuals whose criteria you may not even share.

My first, and indeed only, responsibility is to the people who will put down the eighteen bucks to buy *Weaveworld*. They're the people who I'm writing for. That's the essential relationship between the writer and his audience.

WOLINSKY: *In The Books of Blood and in Damnation Game, and I guess also, to some degree, in Weaveworld, you use a lot of imagery that seems religious in nature. But it isn't really, because you're not sticking with traditional mythologies.*

BARKER: That's right.

WOLINSKY: *Is that deliberate?*

BARKER: There's a great quote from one of my heroes, William Blake, a Christian, in a kind-of-way. He said, speaking of somebody he didn't like who was also a Christian: "We both read the Bible day and night, but he reads black where I read white."

In other words, these mythologies are open to great richness of interpretation. One of the very interesting things for me historically, particularly about the way that the Catholic Church used the mythologies of the pagan systems—I use the word pagan without any

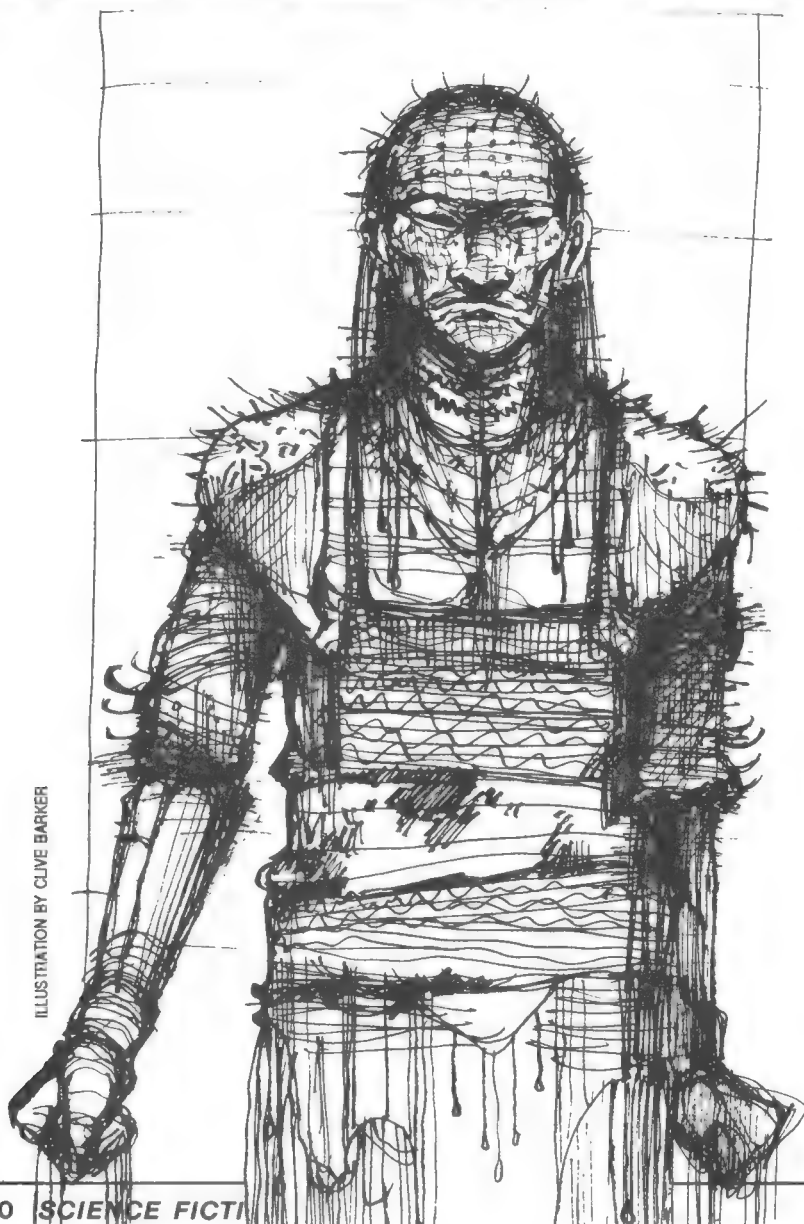


ILLUSTRATION BY CLIVE BARKER

pejorative association whatsoever—pagan systems that it took over, was the way it simply used this imagery and took it to itself. The Church invented the notion of the virgin birth somewhere around the thirteenth century. It sort of celebrates Christ's birthday in the middle of December, about the time that Dionysus' was celebrated. Dionysus also died in a tree and rose after three days.

This imagery is not the sole possession of a religious system which our culture has been shaped by. The imagery belongs, maybe in a very Jungian sense, to our collective unconscious. We can use that and liberate it, the way that I think Blake was trying to liberate the imagery of the Christian Church, and say: "Look, this stuff is valid and important. It is just that it has been corrupted out of all recognition. I am going to put it back into your collective unconscious."

One of the ways that he did it, which I think is very much paralleled with the fictional forms which I use, is that he relocated it in his own world. In the prophetic books, very often Blake is talking about the London that he lived in; and that London is occupied by demons and angels. He's walking down a familiar street as a child and he sees a tree full of angels. It's the place where he was going out for a walk with his parents, but it also happens to be occupied by angels. The whole point is that he's actually building it where you live, having the metaphysics live side by side with you.

The imagery of the Christian Church is in some ways immensely potent because it's charged up with imagery and ideas which belong to the ages. They don't just belong to the Christian Church, they belong to our subconscious, to our collective unconscious. I want to have those images back, I want access to those images, without feeling that they just belong to Jerry Falwell. We should claim that stuff back from those guys.

RICHARD A. LUPOFF: *How did you get those images? Were they pounded into you as a child?*

BARKER: They absolutely were not. No. I was never taken to

The family joke is that when I went in to be baptized, the font water boiled.

church as a kid. The family joke is that when I went in to be baptized, the font water boiled, and I wasn't taken in. I don't have a religious upbringing, I don't have a religious education. I'm self-educated in that imagery, because it fascinates me and because I find it immensely potent. I find it potent, not because I believe that this is the one and only way to salvation, but this kind of imagery is the stuff of our culture. It's not the only stuff of our culture; Mickey Mouse and Elvis Presley are also the stuff of our culture. But the collision between the metaphysical and the sublime, and the rich and the ripe, and the pap that we see on television is a very rich and interesting collision.

LUPOFF: *I agree. In fact some years ago there was a marvelous poster of Mickey Mouse crucified. I wonder if you saw that.*

BARKER: No, I never did. Now, I think that's cool. I think Blake would have understood that. I think Blake probably would have made Mickey Mouse into a lower order of demon.

LUPOFF: *There's an interesting juxtaposition of images that I've noticed in a number of your works, particularly in the film *Hellraiser* and in the *Damnation Game*, your first novel. Sexual imagery, on the one hand—some of which I have to compliment you on, I enjoyed it a lot—juxtaposed repeatedly with images of violence, morbidity and gore. Would you address your reasoning for that?*

BARKER: Absolutely. I have three parts to the answer. The first part is

that I reject utterly the have-sex-and-die kind of picture, stalk and slash. Here we are at Lake Crystal and there is a guy with a machete on the loose. Let's go skinny-dipping.

LUPOFF: *We've all seen that too many times.*

BARKER: Absolutely. That collision of sex and death is not interesting. Though it is actually a collision of sex and death, it's just very trivial and shallow and not at all intellectually or artistically rewarding.

The second is the kind that is addressed by Cronenberg in a lot of his pictures, where you have diseases exchanged with a kiss. There's a kind of body disgust built into a lot of Cronenberg pictures. A perfectly legitimate worldview, but not one that I particularly share.

The third is the confusion that I believe we have about our bodies and our response to our bodies, which can be addressed in this kind of fiction. The same nerve endings which make a touch from the beloved the best thing in life are also the nerve endings which will give us great agony—having gotten out of bed we stub our toe. There is an ambiguity in the way that our bodies are built, and we learn this as children, we learn this very early on, in a pre-sexual condition. We learn that our bodies are ambiguous, paradoxical in what they can provide us with.

Later on, we learn something else; that we are built into, locked into a decaying machine. We learn this from the age of eighteen onwards. One of the horrors, I guess, of being an athlete is that you will start to run down, probably by twenty-five, certainly by thirty. There's an ambiguity there, too. Here we have our mind which can fantasize, which can imagine all kinds of possibilities, inside a body which is increasingly not responding to those possibilities. Cocteau says, "you look into the mirror, you see death." You look into the mirror, you see that happening.

The next point is the whole collision of the sexual, indeed the erotic, and the death imagery, the violence imagery. It seems to me that very often when horror fiction addresses death, as it often does, it

is also covertly addressing sexuality. And I emphasize covertly because it's not very up front about it for the most part. It's there but it's buried. How many horror movies do you know in which girls are carried off by the monster? This is on a very simple level, but what is King Kong doing holding on to Fay Wray?

LUPOFF: *I've always wondered about that.*

BARKER: You didn't wonder for a moment. You know very well what.

LUPOFF: *But I wondered about the mechanics.*

BARKER: The mechanics, yeah, he's into sniffing. One of the scenes that was taken out was where he sniffed his fingers after touching her. I think that's exactly right. That's certainly a legitimate area of erotic endeavor, more now than ever. Sniffing is safe sex, right?

LUPOFF: *So far.*

BARKER: For your friendly gorilla, I guess. Where were we, I was having such fun thinking of Kong.

So when we're talking about the life of the body in the sort of death context, the violence context, in the corruption context, I think very often we're also talking about sexual feelings. So often, sex is about obsession. Often horror fiction is about obsession. So often, sex is about coming to terms with feelings that you're almost out of control of, in fact, may be completely out of control of. Horror fiction is very often about having control or losing control. Sex is always about the body. Horror fiction is over and over again about the body.

The French have the term *petit mort* for the post-orgasmic blues. The French have a point. There's a kind of sense that in the moments of love, anything is possible. And in the moments after, nothing is. That's like a slap in the face. "I own the world. Oh, shit. I don't. I own nothing."

All those collisions of views of the flesh: The flesh celebrated, the flesh flagellated, seem to me to be interesting ambiguities, interesting paradoxes and something that I just go back and back to.

It seems to me that when horror fiction addresses death, it is also covertly addressing sexuality.

WOLINSKY: *Did you start writing The Books of Blood when you were in puberty?*

BARKER: No, I didn't. It's a good question. I was thinking about them when I was in puberty. No, I started writing when I was twenty-eight, twenty-nine. So, it was way, way down the line by that point.

WOLINSKY: *Had you planned on being a writer before then?*

BARKER: I was writing plays and I was painting. That was what I was doing and then I turned to all this relatively late. I got published, I guess, when I was thirty-one.

WOLINSKY: *That means you wrote The Books of Blood in a very short amount of time.*

BARKER: That's right. Yeah, I look back on it, in a very short amount of time. A lot of the stories, a lot of the ideas have been around in some form or other. There's a story called "In the Hills, the Cities," for instance. Which is a story about two towns that turn into giants. That story's been around a while. It was a story that I had wanted to make sense of, in some form or another, and this was the opportunity.

LAWRENCE DAVIDSON: *I see a lot of people in the bookstore. As they open up The Books of Blood, they look at the copyright page and then they come over and they keep asking, "So, where were these stories published before they became a book?"*

BARKER: Right, and the answer is, they weren't. They were conceived as they exist. Well, not quite as they exist. Originally, I wanted the first three *Books of Blood* to be one fat volume. I had read *Dark Forces*, Kirby McCauley's anthology of horror fiction, which I thought was tremendous. I still think it is a tremendous anthology. Pretty much the equivalent, I think, of what *Dangerous Visions* is for science fiction. *Dark Forces* is that for horror fiction. That book was a revelation. Here were Joyce Carol Oates and Isaac Singer and Stephen King and Ramsey Campbell and Ray Bradbury, people with completely different worldviews, completely different social and political points of view, completely different kinds of imagination, all gathered between the same pages. All writing something which I suppose would generically be described as horror fiction, though I have real problems with this kind of terminology. I think it is probably as misleading as it is useful. But, let's assume that these were all horror stories. I looked at this sort of stuff and I thought, "Boy, you can do a lot of stuff with this kind of fiction."

And then a thoroughly arrogant notion occurred to me. I thought, "Wouldn't it be great for me to do all of these." I'll do some comical stuff and I'll do some sexy stuff and I'll do some visceral stuff and I'll do some subtle stuff, I'll do some weird stuff, and so on. And, I'll put them all together in a book. Nobody told me at that point, because I didn't know, that nobody bought short stories.

LUPOFF: *No, but it's amazing that you made it work.*

BARKER: That's right. Nobody actually buys that stuff. I then went to my theatre agent with it and he said, "Well, the real problem with this guy is that short stories are really difficult to sell."

I only had five of them at this point. I had written these first five in a state of blissful ignorance. It was actually quite useful because I'd gone on and just done it.

LUPOFF: *The proverbial bumblebee.*

BARKER: It was great. It was

done. Or, five of them were done. He took them to Gollancz. Gollancz were deeply disgusted and said that these were outrageous and disgusting and they would have nothing to do with them. Zombies were involved in sexual acts. It was just not cool.

They then took them to Sphere and Sphere set up a lunch. And Sphere said, "We love these five stories, we'll publish everything you've got." and I said, "Guys, that's all I've got, just only five stories." And they said, "Well, write some more." So, I wrote, I guess, another ten, and they became the first three *Books of Blood*. I was really walking into walls right, left and center. I knew nothing about this stuff. It was just fun.

LUPOFF: Who was your editor at Sphere?

BARKER: A lovely lady called Barbara Boot. Who was great because she never said no. Actually, that's not quite true; she said no to "In the Hills, the Cities" which is very interesting because later on it won the British Fantasy Award. And she was at the award ceremony, as was my agent who also said that I should never publish this story. That was very gratifying. When I made my little speech having received the award, I actually said, "There are two people in this room, and I'm not going to name them, who told me I should never publish this story." This, I think, is important that one always remember that however useful agents and editors are and, of course, they are useful, finally your imagination knows best.

WOLINSKY: That's the story that had the biggest impression on me. The one thing I noticed about it was that it broke the rules. You had two characters who are carrying on one plot, and then you've got the horror plot, and they come together at the end but it's almost accidental that they come together.

BARKER: Accidental, yeah. It also has two gay characters in it. There are actually very few gay characters in horror fiction. There is very little sex in horror fiction: gay, straight or any other way. Rules are to be broken, right? If you can't break them in the horror genre, where can



PHOTO BY GUION WYLER



ILLUSTRATION BY CLIVE BARKER



PHOTO BY GUION WYLER

you break them? If you can't break them in the fantastique, where can you break them? It doesn't seem that we should just break them; it's actually our duty to break them.

LUPOFF: *There are a lot of references to science fiction in your works. Hellraiser, in fact, if you look at it from a technical viewpoint, is a science fiction story. Although the whole treatment and attitude is . . .*

BARKER: A horror story. Yeah, I agree.

LUPOFF: *Similarly, In the novel Damnation Game, I noticed that one of your characters has a library of science fiction paperbacks to which he turns for solace when he is feeling depressed. Would you talk about that and, particularly, mention any authors that you feel are influential?*

BARKER: Let's just backtrack to something that I mentioned a little while ago about my irritation about the terminology that's associated with these things. I use the term "fantastique" to cover science fiction, horror fiction, fantasy fiction and the other subsections within fantasy fiction.

Now, we've all been to conventions and we know there is great factionalizing that goes on there. You get a horror reader who says he will never read science fiction. You get a sword and sorcery fan who says that he never reads horror, and so on and so forth. This seems to me to be nonsense. Finally, we are all writing literature of the imagination. In one very real sense, anything that I write has a fantastical element. I've only ever written one short story which didn't have a supernatural element in it somewhere.

In another sense, when you're dealing with inter-dimensional beings, as I am in several pieces of fiction, or in deep puzzles, which I am in several pieces of fiction, you're dealing in science fictional territories.

I had a very instructive exchange with somebody in London. I was invited to address a science fiction class. Going back to the story "In the Hills, the Cities," in fact. A guy said, "Ahh, this is a really great story, but I'm a science

Rules are to be broken, right? If you can't break them in the fantastique, where can you break them?

fiction fan, and I'm afraid it doesn't work for me." and I said, "Well, why?" and he said, "Well, you see it doesn't make sense. I mean, you couldn't actually do that. You couldn't actually get ten thousand people and tie them together and make them into one great, big giant. I mean, it wouldn't work, they'd just fall over." So, I said, "Yeah. So, what's the problem with that? This isn't a social plan I'm operating here, this is a fantastical short story." and he said, "But, you know, the thing is you could have solved the problem for me with one sentence." and I said, "Well, what's the sentence. Tell me the sentence." He said, "Well, you could have told me that tying all these people together generated a force field which preserved the homogeneity of this figure, you see, and that would have made it work for me." And I said, "Do you believe such a force field exists?" And he said, "Well, no." "What you're asking, if I understand you correctly, is for a perfectly spurious explanation to be given for this, in order that you can accept the story." And he said, quite seriously, "Oh, yes, yes, that's what I want." And I thought "That's really interesting, because that's the difference between a science fiction fan and me." Because, I couldn't care less about giving artificial explanations.

What's important to me is to get it psychologically true, is to get it right on a dream level, is to get it

right on a subconscious level, is to get it right on a Jungian level. If you get it right on that level, the inventing of the names of machines that will make this all plausible becomes academic. In fact, it almost begins to condescend to the reader. Because what it implies, to me anyway, is that the reader doesn't have the imagination or the breadth to actually say, "This idea makes sense to me, I embrace this idea. I do not need you to invent something from Doctor Who to make this work."

LUPOFF: *I think that that's a wonderful point. That this person that you were conversing with was approaching it on a very literalistic, mechanistic level. You were approaching it on an psychological, emotional level and you were just on different tracks.*

BARKER: It disturbed me in a way, because in the future I want to write stuff which will probably be called science fiction. But I don't want to write mechanistic science fiction because unless you can actually bring—as I can't because I don't have the training—fresh insights or explorations to existing mechanisms, you have to invent the mechanisms. And I don't want to invent mechanisms. It's not useful to do so. I mean, it was kind of interesting when I was naming the characters in *Weaveworld*, because I have problems with pure genre forms of any kind; when they get to the point where they become the kind of book which the mainstream reader couldn't even approach, the Masonic ritual form of fiction. You need the secret handshake to get in. I have a problem with the kind of fantasy which presents you with chronologies and maps and elaborate appendices and, in fact, they're almost as important, if not more important, than the fiction itself.

I discovered when I started to write *Weaveworld*, that I actually had problems with the idea of invented names as well. I'd never realized that I had that problem before. And the reason I had the problem with the names was because it was totally arbitrary. What I did was, as I started to invent the tribes of the book. I wrote out probably thousands of names, just writing stuff out, names as sounds,

basically. And I hated every single damn one of them, because it was just arbitrary. You could fling them all up in the air and they could all come down. The other thing was, they all began to sound like comic strip names. They all began to sound like things that you had heard somewhere before and couldn't think quite where. Eventually, I decided to actually use root words in some way or other. To actually go back and research, where I had to invent a name, and there are actually only four invented names in the entire book, which are the names of the four tribes. I tried to find words which made some kind of genuine sense. Short words: the Ye-me, the Aia, the Lo, and so on. Simple words. Simple, clean words.

LUPOFF: *It seems to me what you were doing there was abandoning the notion of arbitrariness and, if there was not a pre-existing system you could use, you were inventing a system.*

BARKER: Yes. The problem with the invented system is that it becomes the reason to do the thing, in itself. And there are invented system books out there in which the system becomes the *raison d'être*. I think that's very dangerous.

LUPOFF: *Do you think that this is a heritage of Tolkien? That he's got his whole army of people trying to recreate *The Lord of the Rings*?*

BARKER: I'm afraid that man may have more to answer for than we suspect. And I'm a great, great fan. But I do think that by the time the *Silmarillion* came out, people were actually—"forget the story guys, what we want is where does the language come from and where does the accent go."

WOLINSKY: *That's where it started. It started with the language. It didn't start with the story.*

BARKER: That's right. It starts with his sense of what a mythology is. You see, I have another problem with Tolkien which is the fact that I don't think you come out of his books addressing the problems of the world. For instance, there is an almost total absence of useful or interesting female characters in Tolkien. That actually has found its

way through an awful lot of other fantasy fiction. I think that fantasy fiction remains the last refuge of the chauvinist. You can do stuff to women in fantasy fiction that you could not do in an awful lot of other kinds of fiction.

LUPOFF: *Such as?*

BARKER: You can do what Jabba the Hut did to Princess Leia, and that's still cool. You can just basically treat them like sex objects. How many sword and sorcery books can you find with girls in supine positions with very, very low-cut gear on, who are basically sex interests? That's all they are. They're bimbos, inter-galactic bimbos. Why? It's time to get out of that.

We don't have a chance of getting out of the ghettoized thinking unless we address the fact that this kind of fiction should be for a mainstream audience that has legitimate expectations. And one of those expectations is that fifty percent of the world, the female half, should be represented as human beings.

WOLINSKY: *And in *Weaveworld* the most interesting villain and the most interesting hero are both women.*

BARKER: Yes. And in *Hellraiser* I tried to do exactly the same thing. I've come in for a lot of flack there, interestingly. A number of women said to me, "I think it's terrible that there is a villainess in this." I said, "Why? Look at Freddy Krueger, Jason, Michael, Leatherface, isn't it about time that the distaff side had a chance here?" And, Julia does it with motives. It's not like she's a simple-minded character. I like that. I celebrate the possibility that you can write about a hundred percent of humanity.

WOLINSKY: *How did you get involved in movies?*

BARKER: I got into movies because I had two screenplays massacred. A movie called *Rawhead Rex* and a movie called *Underworld*, both of them turned into really terrible movies by people who didn't really care to make good movies. And I thought, "There is only a certain number of ways that you can go on this. I can do what I

think Bradbury has done which is that he's tried his damndest to get good movies made, and for the most part they have not worked.

LUPOFF: *I have to agree with that.*

BARKER: Or you can take the money and run, which is another approach. The third approach was to actually see whether I could do it myself, with a limited budget, and see whether it works. That way maybe I could build up to having some kind of presence in L.A., having some kind of authority to make other movies.

WOLINSKY: *When you started, had you any idea of how to make a movie?*

BARKER: Not the slightest. It was like appearing on set for the first time and saying "Now, which of these static objects is the camera?" I'd had a moment of crisis the week before when I wondered whether I should actually go out and buy a *How to Direct* book. And I thought, "This is an interesting wallow. If I decide to do this, I'm basically confessing to myself that I don't have a clue how to do this. Or if I don't buy it, I'm assuming that, somehow or other, my gut instincts will get me through."

I think I got better at it. It'd be a wonder if I didn't. We filmed in chronological order, roughly speaking. I think the first twenty minutes of the picture are the weakest twenty minutes. I think it gets better. I gradually got a grasp of how to make this work. But, I was learning on a moment to moment basis.

LUPOFF: *What's the connection between that experience and your prior work as a playwright?*

BARKER: Lots. I directed for the theatre so I had a sense of dealing with actors, the way the rapport should work, in principle. I think, given the scale of the budget and the time that we had, that the movie contains a number of very nice performances. Better performances than one would often see in a stalk and slash picture, where the performances tend to be very functional at best. I think what Claire Higgins does with Julia, for instance, is real nice and elegantly structured and paced.

LUPOFF: *She's the stepmother.*

BARKER: She's the stepmother. I think she does what she does kind of well. She goes for it.

The other training I brought to bear was the illustration stuff, which is what I originally started out with. The Cenobite drawings, that kind of thing. I was able to take the drawings to the special effects people and say, "Look, this is the way I want this guy to look. You've got to have pins sticking out of his face." They were very responsive to that.

WOLINSKY: *Did those images come at all from Jodorowski? Or have you ever seen a Jodorowski movie?*

BARKER: Jodorowski? No.

DAVIDSON: *El Topo, The Holy Mountain.*

BARKER: Oh! I'm sorry, yes I have. *El Topo* I saw way back. How long ago was that? 1969 or something?

LUPOFF: *Around there.*

BARKER: Yeah. I'd never seen *The Holy Mountain*, though. Didn't he write some Moebius stuff for a comic strip? I think he did.

DAVIDSON: *He also was working on one of the earlier versions of Dune.*

BARKER: That's right.

DAVIDSON: *That they canned because of him being the man who he is, a little too creative for their tastes.*

BARKER: Yeah. A little too expensive for their tastes. With forty-five million dollars worth of film.

LUPOFF: *In the trash can.*

BARKER: The whole thing about this influence thing is real interesting for me because paintings and illustrations will be as potent an influence as writing.

Joel Peter Whitkins photographs, for instance. Do you know Whitkins' photographs? They are unbelievable, superb pictures. And they were a massive influence. Incredible kinds of images.

So that kind of thing will come in every bit as much. Goya's paintings, Bosch, that kind of stuff,

**The Ronettes
make me
happy. I am
playing that
kind of music
all the time to
myself. If I'm
not playing
that, I'm
playing
Bernard
Herrman.**

that's all part of the texture of what's going on. I probably have as many art books and photography books as I do books with words in them.

LUPOFF: *Did you see a lot of the early, classic horror films? I'm, thinking of Karloff, Lugosi, the real classic era, James Whale.*

BARKER: Not when I was a kid, because they were basically forbidden material. But recently *American Film* asked me to do a top ten for them and James Whale's *Bride of Frankenstein* is the best of the best.

LUPOFF: *Who could quarrel with that?*

BARKER: It's just the best. But I'm also fond of directors that you don't see very much of over here. People like Dario Argento, for instance, who made a wonderful horror movie called *Susperia*, which doesn't really make any great sense, but is very scary. Do you know that picture at all?

WOLINSKY: *No, I haven't heard of him.*

BARKER: I don't think it's even on tape over here. Argento's stuff is really stylish, really violent and

very, very strange. It's kind of surreal, almost. It has a kind of gloss to it which is surreal like Brian De Palma with even less motivation.

LUPOFF: *Something totally unrelated to this. Before we went on the air we were just sitting here chatting and you revealed a certain facet of your personality that really intrigued me. You started talking about the Ronettes. How does that whole aspect of modern pop culture impact your work?*

BARKER: It impacted hugely on a superficial level. And in a book which is coming up, I hope it is going to impact on a profound one, too. In the sense that the Ronettes make me happy. That kind of music makes me happy. I am playing that kind of music all the time to myself. And, if I'm not playing that, I'm playing Bernard Herrman. You are speaking to a schizophrenic. You go through moments when you have to play a thing over and over again. I just got hold of the soundtrack of the Bernard Herrman score for *Obsession*, the De Palma picture, which I keep playing. When I get fed up with that, I play the Chiffons. It's major music, it's great.

WOLINSKY: *You grew up in Liverpool. You were eleven or twelve years old at the rise of the Beatles.*

BARKER: I guess that's right. I was born off Penny Lane, literally, the road off Penny Lane. I do remember, very forcibly, hordes of teenagers coming and taking photographs of all the houses, when the song came out. The Beatles thing has gone with me since. Linda McCartney took the photograph on *Weaveworld*. Three out of four articles begin: Paul McCartney look-alike: Clive Barker. It was very interesting, because Linda was asked to do this photograph and nobody mentioned to her that this has been said. Which was cool by me. So, I went to the site of the photo session, a long photo session. There were a lot of photos to be taken. About two hours into it she said, "You know, I just realized who you remind me of." and I thought, here it comes. And she says, "You remind me of my ten year old son."



PHOTO BY GUION WYLER

LUPOFF: A generation gap strikes.

BARKER: Absolutely.

LUPOFF: We were talking earlier about your work as a playwright. But you never mentioned the themes of your plays or the titles of them or any details, unless that's a secret.

BARKER: Oh no, no. In fact, we're looking at doing editions of those in the not too distant future. There are eleven full-length plays. Many of the titles speak for themselves. *Frankenstein in Love* was a grand guignol piece. Always a romantic, you know.

LUPOFF: Are you familiar with Tom Disch?

BARKER: Oh, sure.

LUPOFF: And his opera of *Frankenstein*?

BARKER: I know of it, though I've never heard it. I know nothing about it, though I know it exists.

LUPOFF: All I know of it is, he once did a reading for us of the final soliloquy of the monster which is wonderful, just wonderful.

BARKER: Is it really? I believe that. I have never had any access to that material, though I would be fascinated to hear what it was like.

I did a play called *History of the Devil* which was literally that. I did a play called *Colossus* about Goya, my favorite painter. I did a piece called *Subtle Bodies* which is about a hotel which turns into a ship and then sinks, which was kind of strange. I did a play called *Crazy Face* about the great semi-mythological fool Til Eulenspiegel who Strauss wrote about. I did a play called *Paradise Street* set in my own town, Liverpool. I did a play called *The Secret Life of Cartoons*.

LUPOFF: *The Secret Life of Cartoons*. C'mon now, you're really pushing a button there. What about that?

BARKER: Well, *The Secret Life of Cartoons* had a great life on the fringe in England and in Europe and Edinburgh, the festival. And then it had a disastrous life on the West End when it became a legitimate production. In part because I



ILLUSTRATION BY CLIVE BARKER

lost control of it. With all these movies and all this stuff, maybe I'm coming across as a control freak. But, I genuinely do think that sometimes things get lost. An essence gets lost. Some producers came in, they cast some stars and the thing was lost.

But, this play is a nice notion. It's about a guy who gets thrown out of his job as an animator at studio which is clearly Warner Brothers, except that it is set in New York for plot reasons. He's a Chuck Jones kind of guy. He's absolutely obsessed with this stuff. He's obviously a genius. His great creation is a character called Roscoe Rabbit. To Roscoe he has given all his best lines, all his jokes, all his taste in clothes and everything. He's basically a hollow man because he lives utterly through these cartoons. He gets thrown out of his job and he gets back to his apartment to find that Roscoe Rabbit has also left his job and has preceded him back to the apartment. He is so much sexier, so much more dapper, so much funnier than the cartoonist, that the creation has actually gone to bed with his creator's wife. He finds that his wife is in an adulterer's clinch with this rabbit. The studio then sends out a bisexual duck, a cat, a selection of cartoon characters, a rabbit hunter to recapture the rabbit. At the end of the play we discover that, in fact, the entire studio, from word one, has been run by cartoons, and is run by a little Capone character who is simply referred to as "The Mouse". It's kind of fun. It's a weird piece of work and it needed to stay weird.

The problem when you go into legitimate theatre in the West End is that it costs a lot of money to mount the thing and they have to clean up your act because they are cleaning it up for a tourist audience. Suddenly, you find that you're losing control of the stuff you really loved. And, a lot of the nice stuff goes and it gets coarsened in a curious kind of way because it gets simplified. Suddenly, it's Vaudeville and it lost it. The reviews were disastrous. They deserved to be because it was a bad production. Maybe, one time down the line I'll let Roscoe out again but I'm not holding my breath while I wait.

The whole audience sort of lifts six inches off the seat. You can't do that in a book, really.

LUPOFF: *I just want to hit on one phrase which you have just used this very moment, which is "down the line." Here you are, still a relatively young man, in your mid-thirties. You have a remarkably productive and versatile record as playwright, as illustrator, as short story writer, as novelist, as filmmaker. Have I left anything out?*

BARKER: I breathe.

LUPOFF: *In this room, that's an achievement. But, what is down the line for Clive Barker? What's coming up?*

BARKER: As a kid, my hero on earth was Cocteau. I wanted to grow up to be Jean Cocteau. I saw a piece of *Testament of Orpheé* when I was a little kid before I knew what the hell any of this stuff was, and thought it was just unbelievable. It's the bit—you remember, Cocteau was in that movie—where Cocteau gets the spear thrown through him by the horse-headed women. Remember? The spear is pulled out real slow. It's a moment. Cocteau was a painter and a writer and a movie-maker and a playwright and what he was finally describing, it seems to me, was a single world, was a single terrain. And he was describing it in various ways. It's a bit like he was a journalist who was going out there with a camera and a sketchbook and a notebook and a tape recorder and he was saying "Okay, here's the world and I'm going to take account of it".

Sometimes you're going to want

to take photographs, and sometimes you're going to want to do drawings and sometimes you're going to want to write about it. But, finally, the space between your ears, the terrain, the special country which is uniquely yours and the special country which is uniquely everybody's, lends itself in various ways to different kinds of description.

If *Weaveworld* eventually becomes a movie, we will lose an awful lot because it is a six hundred page book. We gained some things in turning "The Hellbound Heart," the novella, into *Hellraiser*. One of the things we gained was the fact that people can jump. When Christ falls out of the closet in *Hellraiser*, which he does (he may have been pushed), the audience jumps. The whole audience sort of lifts six inches off the seat. You can't do that in a book, really.

I would like, ideally, to continue to describe this terrain in as many ways as possible. The excitement being that it's all the same country and that, going back to a much earlier part of our conversation, is one of the reasons why I reject this genre breakdown all the time. I write fantasy, I will be writing science fiction. I write for kids now, and I write plays, or whatever. It's my imagination, it's your imagination, whatever you do is a product of you, it's a product of your imagination. That's what's important.

LUPOFF: *What have you written for kids?*

BARKER: I've got a book coming up which is being illustrated by a lady friend of mine which I really like, which is about the creator deciding that the world should be boxed up and put away. Everything. And about a girl and her iguana who managed to escape this fate with hilarious results. It's a very strange little book, actually.

LUPOFF: *Oh, it sounds lovely.*

BARKER: Yeah, I don't know what the kids are going to make of it but I'm having a good time.

WOLINSKY: *Weaveworld—fantasy, new direction, of sorts, I guess it kind of ties in with everything else. The imagery is in many ways very similar to your other imagery,*

though it's obviously a lighter touch. Are you planning to move more towards a lighter touch from here on out?

BARKER: Lighter in one sense because it's not as visceral. But in another sense, I think that when the bad things happen to the characters in *Weaveworld*, they are very bad. I think, in part because I hope the characters are more approachable than they have been in previous books, it may be that the harm that is done to them will be all the more significant. Harm which is healed for the first time in the books. The book moves toward moments of epiphany and optimism and life confirmation. It's an Eden book, finally. It's a book about our dreams of Eden, our hopes for Eden. I think it's the first really optimistic thing that I've done. You have to get through an awful lot of bad times to get to the good stuff, but you do get to the good stuff towards the end. I like that, but I also like the idea that—I don't like the idea, I wish it wasn't this way but it is this way—it's a fight. It's always a battle, the battle is on, the battle continues.

I don't want to write lies. I don't want to write indecently optimistic work that implies that somehow or other you push the right magic button and the heaven opens with rainbows. It doesn't. But I would like to trace a path for characters in the future which move them towards a kind of understanding going back to William Blake, that he would have understood about the world, which is that the miracles are just around the corner, and they are very personal and they are very private and they are very intimate and they are very local.

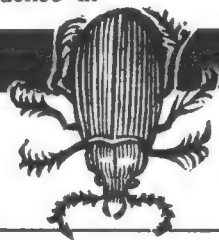
The Hindus have thirty-three million gods, gods of rocks, gods of roots, gods of certain trees, gods of certain leaves of grass. We have one. We're lagging behind here. I think that what Blake would have understood, absolutely, and what I think fantasy fans and readers and writers understand, is the private and the personal and the intimate magic which makes the vision of having thirty-three million gods perfectly plausible. That there is a thing haunting every corner and step and railing and you know that

as a kid. You are certain of that as a kid. You lose that, it gets bullied out of you. It gets blasted out of you by your education. You're told that there is this thing called reality and then there is this other thing, which is negligible, which is your fantasy life, the world of illusions, the world of dreams.

Paul says, when I was a child, I thought like a child; now, I'm a man and I have put away childish things. I haven't put away childish things. Paul was wrong, I'm holding on. One of the childish things is to know, not think or believe, but, to know that just behind the facade of solidity there are things more potent and more persuasive than the solid. Things which have an influence in

our dream lives. Things which we sense when we are happy. The moments of epiphany which come upon us because there is a certain smell in the air or because there is a certain light in the sky. When we know, when we absolutely know, that the world means us no harm, it's only other human beings who do. And, in fact, that maybe the system means us no harm either. That if we could just get on to the right ride, get to understand the way the moment works, things are cool, things are good. I want to touch that more and more.

And just have a little bit of slime edging up behind the people while they do it. ●



*Science Fiction,
Fantasy, Horror
and
Bizarre Fiction—*

**BOUGHT, SOLD
AND TRADED**

Prompt, Personal Service

— FREE CATALOG —

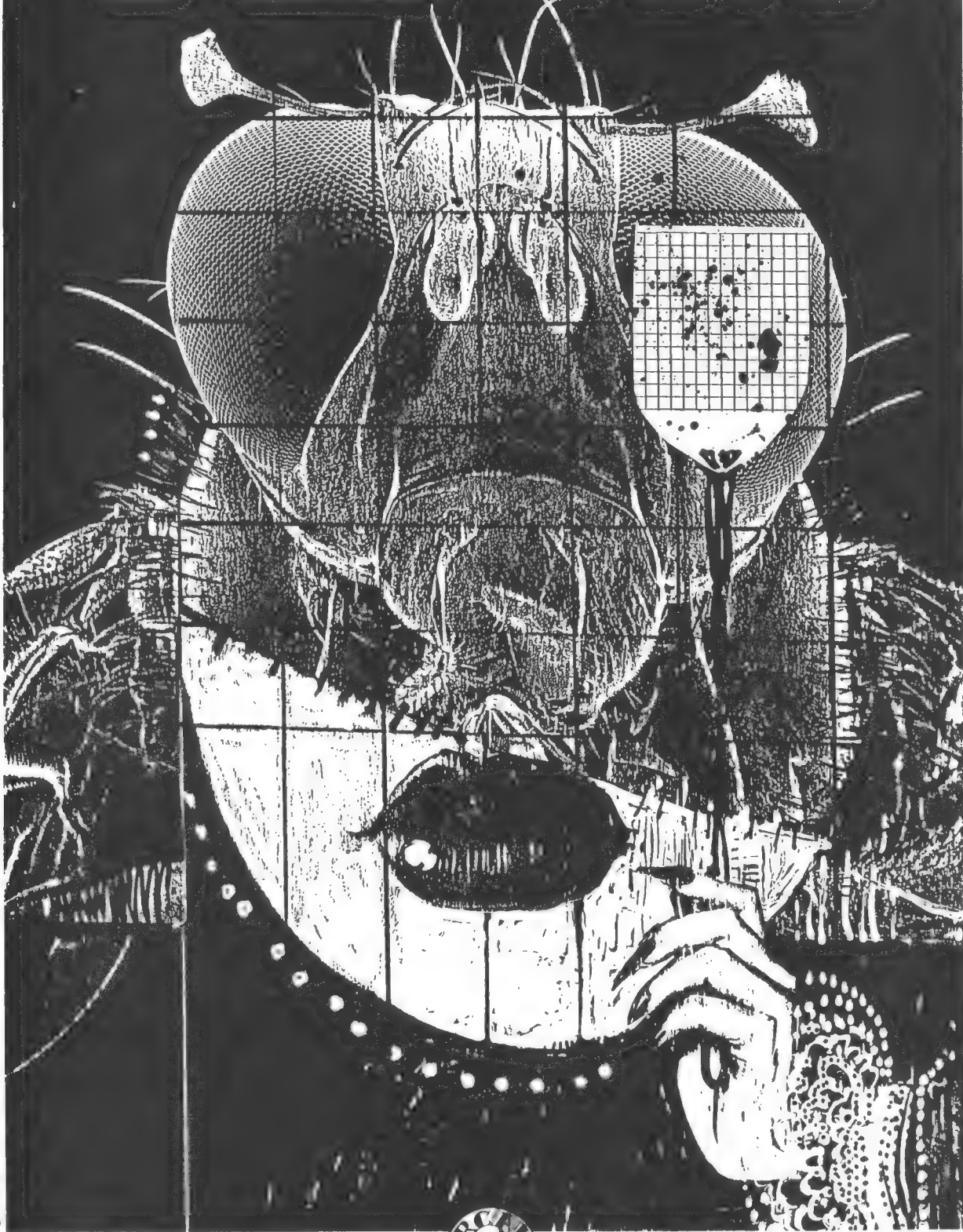
Mark V. Ziesing

P.O. Box 806

Willimantic, CT 06226

(203) 423-5836

FLY IN MY EYE



© 1988 BILL SIENKIEWICZ

COMING SOON FROM



ARCANE COMIX

715 EIGHTH STREET, S.E., SUITE 300

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20003



ILLUSTRATION BY DAN STEFFAN

Eventually living in Lynchburg became unfeasible. I was broke and getting deeper in debt, while our children were needing braces and college. Even if it was peaceful and cozy in Lynchburg, the bandwidth always seemed way too low—where the "bandwidth" of some information source means the number of bits per second that it delivers.

What was really chafing on me the most was my strong sense that I was missing out on a great intellectual revolution: the dawn of computer-aided experimental mathematics. Fractals, chaotic iterations, cellular automata—it was everywhere. I clicked over the final switchpoint when I went as a journalist to Princeton and Cambridge to interview computer scientists for an article about cellular automata. Those guys were having so much fun, looking at such neat things, and making up such great theories about what they saw! I decided to become one of them.

If you're a mathematician, becoming a computer scientist is not so much a matter of new knowledge as a matter of new attitude. Born again. Willing to commit to the machine. By way of preparation, I wrote *Mind Tools*, a book which surveys mathematics from the standpoint that everything is information. So when I got the chance to interview for a job in the Math. & C.Sc. department at San Jose State University, I had thought about computers enough to give a good talk on information theory. They hired me.

Most people in the East don't know where San Jose is. Put your right hand so the palm faces down. Think of the left edge of your arm as the coast of California. San Francisco is the tip of your thumb. The space between thumb and forefinger is San Francisco Bay. The thumb's first knuckle is Palo Alto. San Jose is at the bottom of your thumb, near the bay, and the west edge of the thumb is Santa Cruz. Silicon Valley is the thumb's second joint, between San Jose and Palo Alto. There's a lot of roads and a lot of traffic. It almost never rains.

One of the courses I had to teach my first semester here was

REPORT FROM SILICON VALLEY

By Rudy Rucker

Assembly Language. Assembly language is a very stark and simple language—a bit like Basic—with about a hundred elementary commands. What makes assembly language tricky is that in order to use it properly you need to have a very clear image of what is going on inside the specific family of machines you are writing for (our course is for PC clones). You have to interact with the machine a little before you can get an assembly language program to run. I got the textbook: Dan Rollins, *8088 Macro Assembler Programming*, and I couldn't understand what it was about at all. The only computer I'd used at this point was an old Epson CP/M machine for word processing. I didn't know that 8088 is the name of a processor made by Intel. I didn't know that you say it "eighty-eighty-eight" and not "eighty-thousand-and-eighty-eight" or "eight-oh-eight-eight." I didn't know what MS-DOS was. If I was the type to panic, I would have done so.

Fortunately there was another mathematician turned computer scientist at SJSU who was teaching Assembly Language the period

before me. I went to his classes and wrote down everything he said, and then I would teach that to my class. I enjoyed sitting in his class like a student again, soaking up info for free. The only thing about his class I didn't like was this jerk who sat in front of me, a guy named Farley.

Farley was fat and petulant. His upper lip stuck out like that of the man in that crummy Sunday funnies cartoon, "The Lockhorns," if you've ever seen it. Farley would get into big arguments with the teacher about arcane features of assembly language. He would interrupt without even raising his hand. And after class he was always trying to cozy up to the Vietnamese girls.

I could never get enough machine time to do the assembly language homework, so after the first semester I went and bought a maximum computer—AT, hard disk, EGA color, the works. Some of my friends on the faculty were real computer jocks, and they helped me get psyched up for it. One guy in particular liked to say: "Computers are to the eighties what LSD was to the sixties."

The first program I ran was a Mandelbrot set program that a fan had sent me. I was so happy, watching the colored little dots accumulate. I didn't know any other programs yet, but I could make this one look different by screwing with the monitor controls. If you messed up the vertical hold and set the monitor to analog instead of digital mode, for instance, the picture looked sort of like Antarctica, with more and more new little pixels moving in, men in boats, penguins, real deep info being born.

The next program I played with a lot was Charles Platt's "Cell Systems" program for showing cellular automata. Charles and I went to a CA (cellular automata) conference together at MIT right before I came to SJSU. I liked to look at Charles' program all the time; in the morning or at night, especially at night. To my way of thinking, cellular automata are rich enough to symbolize everything: society, the brain, physics, whatever. The whole thing with a cellular automaton is that you have a tiny tiny program that is obeyed by each pixel or screen cell. With each tick of the system clock, the cells all look at their nearest neighbors and use the tiny program to decide what to do next. Incredibly rich patterns arise: tapestries, spacetime diagrams, bubble chamber photos, mandalas, you name it. Each pattern is a screenful of info, about 100,000 bits, but the pattern is specified by a very short rule, sometimes as short as eight bits. The "extra" information comes from timeflow, from the runtime invested, from the logical depth of the computation actually done. The same thing is true for the Mandelbrot set, by the way.

That next semester—this would be the spring of '87—I taught assembly language again, plus an advanced course in Pascal. With Pascal I couldn't find a teacher to copy, so it was pretty grim. I spent a lot of time trying to get my programs to work, or at least to figure out what I could lecture on the next day. Assembly language was starting to be fun, though. Making it up as I went along, I showed my class how to write a program to show simple cellular automata, and it worked, and we were all really happy. One of my programs made

**WITH EACH
TICK OF THE
SYSTEM
CLOCK, THE
CELLS ALL
LOOK AT
THEIR
NEAREST
NEIGHBORS
AND USE THE
TINY
PROGRAM
TO DECIDE
WHAT TO DO
NEXT.**

a pattern that looked like elephants and giraffes. Shirley Temple used to sing "Animal Crackers in my Soup," and in *Gravity's Rainbow*, Pynchon has someone call that song "Super Animals in my Crack." That's what my picture looked like to me. I bought a 24-pin dot matrix printer so I could start saving the pictures I made.

In the summer, I got hold of a CAM-6 "cellular automaton machine." I'd convinced the school to buy one from a San Francisco company. They were slow to ship, but I was local enough to get on their case. Finally they sent the naked board in a box of styrofoam peanuts. I got Toffoli, the guy in Cambridge who invented it, to send me software, and the school lab techs helped me get the board running. I put it in my computer and my screen was a window into incredible new worlds. The CAM-6 makes patterns that look alive. And fast? Imagine globs of oil oozing around on your screen like a lightshow. 60 updates a second!

So in the fall I was ready to go to some computer conferences. I went to a conference on Artificial Life in Los Alamos. Artificial life is such a great concept. I mean, forget artificial intelligence, let's do artificial life. Simple programs that grow and get more interesting as time goes on. Programs that *eat* computational energy! It was great at the Los Alamos conference. It was the first time I'd ever felt comfortable at an academic conference. We were all interested in the same thing: evolving artificially alive systems. And it was exactly what I'd been writing about in *Software* and *Wetware*. Really happening at a government lab! The town of Los Alamos is weird, like a Twilight Zone movie set. They have a little museum with fullscale whitepainted models of Little Boy and Fat Man. It made me just a little anxious why the government would be interested in artificial life. But I'll trust those boppers to get free.

Even more fun was a meeting I went to a month later, something called Hackers 3.0, the third of a presumably annual meeting of Silicon Valley hackers. I was a little nervous going—I mean, was I a poser? But it was the most welcoming atmosphere I've felt since I went to my first science fiction convention, Seacon at Brighton in '80. I'd gone there very nervous, and had immediately met my heroes, Robert Sheckley and Ian Watson. In straight academia there's not enough money and they usually don't welcome newcomers. But in science fiction, and again in the hacker's world, I got a feeling of "Come on in! The more the merrier! There's enough for all of us! We're having fun, yeeeee-haw!"

Some of the guys at Hackers had read some of my books, which made me happy, and we stayed up all night playing with the CAM-6. Like many others, I'd brought my machine with me. One guy explained to me why he wanted to have his head frozen. He had a zit on his nose, and I had to wonder about freezing the zit too. At the end of the conference we posed for a big group picture. To get the right expression on our faces, we chanted: "Hack, hack, hack, hack . . ." They all seemed like such content guys—happy because they actually

know how to *do* something.

Now it's spring, '88, and I'm teaching courses in computer graphics, assembly language, and cellular automata. Teaching CAs has been the greatest, and I've just finished writing my first disk of programs, nice fast color cellular automata programs that run on PC, XT, or AT clones. If you want one, send \$10 to:

Freestyle CA

15175 Blossom Hill Road
Los Gatos, CA 95032

Yesterday I was at another computer meeting, this one mostly chip designers. One of the guys was giving a talk about a great new chip he's building and someone asks: "How much will it cost?" and he comes back real fast: "Hey, I'd like to give them away." Another guy had a bottle of liquid nitrogen to show off a superconductor he'd gotten from Edmund Scientific. When we got tired of that he poured a lot of liquid nitrogen into a reflecting pool. The liquid nitrogen froze itself little boats of water that it sat on, boiling, finally leaving one small crystal of dry ice. Another guy took me out to the garage and showed me an electronic lock that he'd designed for his Corvette. There's a three-position toggle switch by the door, and to unlock the car, you jiggle the switch sixteen times up or down from center. The whole glove compartment was full of chips to make the system work. It was all he could do to keep from telling me the combination. Someone else had robot cars that seek light. Another one had programmed flashing electronic jewelry . . . and of course I brought my CAM-6.

A lot of play, but beyond that, there's a real sense here of being engaged in The Great Work, much the same sense as workers on the Notre Dame cathedral might have felt. But it's all high stress too, in a California kind of way. If you're not plugged in and working at staying that way, you can slip down real fast. Take Farley.

A couple of months ago I saw Farley's picture in the paper. It took me a minute to understand what he'd done. He'd gone to a company that had fired him, and had killed seven people because some girl

there wouldn't go out with him. I thought of all the times I'd wanted to tell Farley what an asshole he was, and was glad I hadn't. And then I was scared—what if he'd been in love with one of the math secretaries? Something that really got me was the descriptions of the seven people who'd died. For four of them, there were *no facts available*. They were simply additional human computer fodder who'd drifted out here to make some money. No friends, no connections, just a tiny expensive room in a garden apartment complex.

One of my students in the CA course works at the place where Farley shot the people. "We heard the shooting," he told me, "and we went and hid behind the big computer." Somehow that's very heart-breaking to me—the people here can be so fucked and unreliable—and the only place to hide is behind the mainframe. ●

Professor Rucker does a fine job of telling you what he's up to in the above article. His latest novel, the very funny Wetware, is reviewed elsewhere in this issue.

interzone

SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY

will go from a quarterly to a bi-monthly schedule in the second half of 1988. This reflects both rising sales and a growth in the amount of good material we have in hand. Each issue contains a fine selection of sf and fantasy stories by new and established writers—in addition to a wide range of non-fiction features. "Interzone is the decade's most interesting science fiction magazine"—William Gibson, author of *Neuromancer*. "Brilliantly varied and frequently breathtakingly audacious stories"—Iain Banks, author of *The Wasp Factory*.

INTERZONE 23, Spring 1988, contains:

David Brin: The Giving Plague
Christopher Evans: Artefacts
Paul J. McAuley: Karl and the Ogre
Kim Newman: Famous Monsters
Greg Egan: Scatter My Ashes
S.M. Baxter: Something for Nothing
plus an interview with Karen Joy Fowler, a column by Charles Platt, film reviews, book reviews and more

INTERZONE 24, Summer 1988, contains:

Karen Joy Fowler: Heartland
Brian Stableford: The Growth of the House of Usher
Philip Mann: Lux in Tenebris
Eric Brown: The Time-Lapsed Man
Alex Stewart: Animator
Julio Buck Abrera: Salvage
plus an interview with Thomas M. Disch, the second of Charles Platt's controversial columns, and much more

INTERZONE 25, September/October 1988, will be our first bi-monthly issue. In hand are stories by **Barrington Bayley**, **David Langford**, **Ian Watson** and many others.

For a four-issue subscription in the United Kingdom send £7.50 to 124 Osborne Road, Brighton BN1 6LU. Please make cheques or postal orders payable to INTERZONE. Overseas subscribers send £8.50 by International Money Order. American subscribers may pay by dollar cheque: please send \$15 (or \$18 if you want delivery by air mail) to our British address, above. Kindly specify which issue you want your subscription to commence with. Single copies of the magazine are £1.95 inland, £2.50 overseas (or \$4 seamount, \$5 airmail, to the USA).



ILLUSTRATION BY CHARLES BURNS © 1986

In the Wake of the Wave

To refurbish a cliché, British and American SF are two promontories of the genre divided by a common language.

Americans think of British SF as cool, reflective, anti-technological, often domesticated and small-scale. I think many natives of the USA feel themselves the inheritors of a rough-and-ready, can-do heritage, and in UK SF they sense a thin contempt for that. The Campbellian engineer-author who took an evening off from his poker game to spin an *Astounding* yarn is perhaps more legend than fact. But I suspect many readers feel they could damn well do that if they but had the time.

There certainly is in British SF a studied lack of interest in how the world works. Mechanism doesn't seem to animate its authors; they care more for what the world *is*. And their reaction to it is often a pervasive sadness.

Two literary facets seem to best typify its differences from the US brand. One is landscape. As Joseph Nicholas has remarked, the authors of, say, *Graybeard*, *The Twilight of Briareus*, *A Dream of Wessex*, and *Pavanne* use physical background as a primary component. Sometimes this seems to lend the landscape an active role in determining events. Keith Roberts, following Ballard, especially likes characters who are overwhelmed by their surroundings, relatively powerless against forces of both history and environment. Generating a real sense of time and place gives British SF a heavy novelistic "feel," a sensation we all got from Dickens' London fog, Hardy's Wessex heath and the Brontës' moors.

This parallels its frequent technophobia; technological change often transforms the land. In the US, much of the country was transformed by technological change within the lifetimes of its natives, bringing to its SF a conviction that the landscape was malleable. We here have *made* the land, and though we of course have our regional SF novelists (Simak, Bryant), it is less holy and forceful for us. Perhaps it is appropriate that the highest density of SF authors is in southern California, the recent product of vast water projects.

by Gregory Benford

British SF's second major literary facet is an abiding concern for character. I'm more likely to remember the figures in British SF. I particularly find Bob Shaw's people quirky and interesting, even as he advances into the territory of big-picture world-building SF with *The Ragged Astronauts*. However, concern for character sometimes robs novels of the strangeness which is central to SF, and gives UK SF a flavor of domesticated, kitchen-coziness.

UK critics often assume that higher standards in SF entail greater fidelity to the bourgeois novel of character, without wondering whether such concerns might undermine what SF can achieve. Portraying figures in a radically altered future is more difficult than, say, getting into the mind of a Joycean Dubliner. Making such people "real" can lessen the *outré* effects an author may be striving for. It also avoids a deeper question—how much of what we "know" about character is simply conventional wisdom of the moment, and when should the author try to destroy such assumptions before proceeding? By bringing science as a major driving force into narrative, we inevitably create fresh tensions between content and form, character and background. To me, British SF often dodges these problems. One of the real accomplishments of the New Wave was to raise these issues, but it invented ways of deflecting them onto mannerist prose just as quickly. The lesson must be relearned by every generation.

It was fitting that the *Hitchhiker's Guide* series came from Britain. It pokes fun at SF clichés, avoiding the unsettling strangeness which is central to SF. Better to laugh, though, than simply ignore the implicit SF message—that cozy humanism is not the only legitimate viewpoint.

CLASS AND CRITICS

I've always found the class structure of Britain fascinating, as *Timescape* made obvious. Its operation in the SF world is murky to outsiders, but appears powerful. British literary conventions reflect class postures that seem to us to have little to do with effective storytelling.

Often there is, to my ear, a preferred voice—cool, reflective, ironic, uninvolved—which seems an echo of class rituals in the society as a whole. Its drawback is a certain self-consciousness that pervades works of serious intent. Preference for this voice helps along the impression of wan lassitude, conversation in a nasal drawl, and *fin-de-siècle* poses. Among the writers there appears to be an affected dislike of organizations, too—particularly the hated SFWA, which has more members in Canada than in the UK. Attitudes toward awards, particularly the Nebulas, draw the lines well—a certain easygoing American practicality about the inevitable bias in awards, contrasted with a British insistence on high moral standards, striking of dramatic postures, and purity of public appearances.

All this comes through clearly in British criticism, which wears its biases like a badge of honor. Scarcely anyone in the UK can review a Heinlein or Pournelle novel without ritual flourishes. They often assume the US literary world is both cynical (publish

or perish) and naive (politically and socially atomistic)—a familiar we're-Athens-you're-Rome ritual—but in truth I don't see that much difference between the countries. Both suffer the uneasy marriage between litbiz and art.

Among the authors themselves, there is a lot of antagonism between figures of comparable ambition. Certainly something must explain the occasional outbursts of virulence, mugging masquerading as criticism, and backbiting; gossip is *much* more interesting in England. This isn't all to the bad, of course—I find Charles Platt a delightfully venomous critic of the foibles of the field; it deliciously appeals to my low nature.

If the critical game is played in Britain with both daggers and broadswords, nonetheless the outcome is quite pleasing. We have some good academic critics (Scholes, Slusser, Rabkin, Samuelson, etc.) and two outstanding writer-commentators on the field (Budrys and Spinrad), but the British have the best all-round observers. John Clute's convoluted syntax alternately exposes and obscures a penetrating intellect capable of adroit turns of both logic and phrase. Roz Kaveny, operating out of a sensibility which seems the most European and ideological, shows a broad grasp of the field, and the tensions generic to SF. Brian Stapleford brings an original synthesis of writerly know-how and sociological insight, though at times I sense that he wishes every book were heavy on the social extrapolation and light on everything else, so he could really dig his teeth in. There are Parringer and Priest and Watson, coming from different angles, but all with viewpoints educated both in the academic sense and the fan sense. The evolution of British SF appears to be more heavily influenced by cynicism than the American, and this may be a good thing.

Perhaps, as is true of academic politics, the competition is fierce precisely because the spoils are so meager.

BREAKFAST IN THE RUINS

It has been a decade or so since *New Worlds* died while Charles Platt tried CPR on it, but the ruins of the New Wave assumptions still cast their long blue shadows.

You'd think, given the absence of translation costs and troubles, that British SF would have a big influence on the American scene. It doesn't, mostly because of the New Wave.

Judy Lynn Del Rey once remarked that foreign SF doesn't sell well in the USA, and that seems to be an automatic assumption among American editors. They say British SF hasn't sold well in the past, and thus is seldom bought today. ("It's downbeat novels with good characterization," David Hartwell said to me while I was discussing this article.) Meanwhile, American SF writers loom large in Britain—indeed, American SF seems to be widely regarded as the real stuff, with a flavor other countries don't have.

Why? If I had to sum up the last fifteen years, I'd say that the New Wave won in England and was digested in the USA. The common rhetoric of that time was that the New Wave represented pessimism and technophobia. This is a shallow game, deciding

whether a piece of fiction is "optimistic" or not. Ultimately, writers are judged by rather more interesting standards than whether they wrote *Ja oder Nein* in the face of our vexed condition. Instead, it seems to me in retrospect that *passivity* was the fatal hallmark of the New Wave impressed into the minds of American readers.

As a metaphor, entropy seems to please the European imagination better than the American. It often leads to (in McLuhan terms) a cool rather than hot writing style. American readers often complain of a low energy level in British writing. Similarly, hot-style writers like Ellison do less well in the UK. Those New Wave figures who took a more hot tone, stressing angry pessimism—Spinrad is the obvious leader here—seem to have fared well in the years since. Colin Greenland's book on the New Wave, *The Entropy Exhibition*, shows, for those of us whose memories have faded, how diverse it really was. Overall, though, there seems a general agreement with Aldiss' comment (made in the sixties) that SF should recognize the fallen state of man and the tragic view of life which is essential to all literature. One can agree with this view while still noticing that it is a cul-de-sac, like any other prescription for what literature "must" be.

Is this tenor still present in the UK? Judging from *Interzone*, that notable attempt to revive the dash of British SF, yes. Malcolm Edwards is clearly a major figure in England; he's a Cambridge man, has all the social moves down pat, and knows the field. His first short story, in *Interzone* #4, begins its second paragraph, "Norton felt gripped by a lassitude born of futility, but as on the eight other mornings of this unexpected coda to his existence, fought off this feeling and slid wearily out of bed." The story is a well-done direct descendant of Ballard's bleak landscapes, with so-what figures striking postures before it; this time, CND horrors take the place of Ballard's assorted implacable disasters.

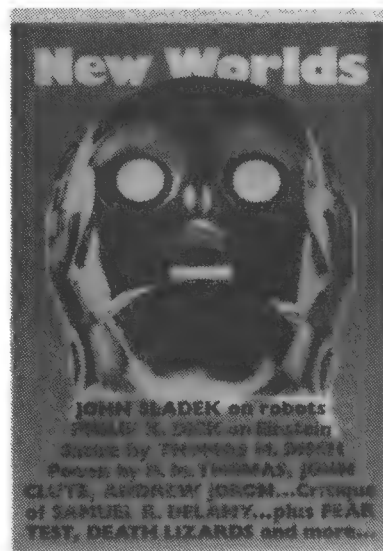
It is easy to see this as a reaction to Europe's self-inflicted wounds in the first half of the twentieth century. Ballard clearly sings of the death of empire, a kind of reverse Kipling. I suspect this fashionable despair comes in part from the fact that literary intellectuals are a progressively less powerful class. The influence of arts graduates on UK SF is considerable (particularly among the critics), and probably explains the splitting-away of writers like Clarke, Bulmer, Brunner and Sheffield, who are more interested in technology. In the fifties, British SF writers often adopted a fake-American voice to get published. This obscured the fact that there is a genuine strain in UK SF which is not technophobic and does more nearly match American tastes.

This is best exemplified by Clarke, who is of course regarded as utterly unrepresentative of British SF. Yet he is only atypical of the post-sixties phase. His success derives primarily from an older tradition: the dispassionate cosmological view, a la Desmond Bernal and Olaf Stapledon, with touches of Wells. Whereas American world-figure SF authors represent a time or an attitude which is localized (Heinlein, Bradbury, Asimov, Herbert), Clarke seems to appeal to an international taste, yet has firm roots in British literature.

There is a contrary flavor in British SF, of disconnectedness from experience, as though the future is more approachable through dreaming than through extrapolation of the present. Travel by metaphors, they seem to say, not by the icons of gadgetry, or even science. Ballard preferred to imagine America rather than visit it; facts would get in the way. (Indeed, there is a pervasive inability among Europeans to see American "optimism" as anything more than a peculiar assertion or defiance, little more than naive bravado, in the face of anxiety.) Moorcock does enormous research for some of his unusual period-piece novels, but none for his SF. And though the British liked William Gibson's work, they did so precisely because it is a fiction of *surfaces*—the gloss of the future, without much plausible expectation that the 21st century actually will be a time dominated by the personal computer—that's the present, after all. The Brits prefer seeing experience in the light of history, which means stressing the appearances of an era, its atmospherics (interior landscapes, as it were). This links with the arts graduate postures, which are often about surface rather than content.

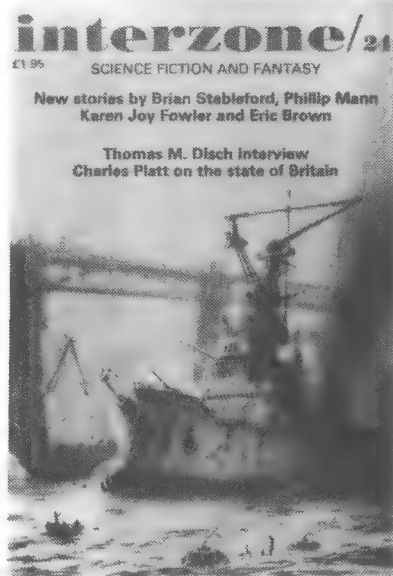
The outstanding, digested legacy of the New Wave in the USA, on the other hand, is two-fold: First, an increased literary sophistication used by many of our best writers, from adroit dinosaurs like Fred Pohl to newer, hard-edged

As a metaphor, entropy seems to please the European imagination better than the American.



The final issue of *New Worlds*

I felt the influence of British SF strongly in the early 1970s, when I began to think earnestly about writing.



The most recent issue of *Interzone*

people like Joe Haldeman. This is indeed a positive force, often under-rated. I felt the influence of British SF strongly in the early 1970s, when I began to think earnestly about writing.

The second legacy has been a disaster for the British writers who've come along since 1970. They seem to work in the shadow of the New Wave, unable to break through its metaphors, and bearing the weight of publishers' opinion that they are non-commercial writers. They receive less support at home than seems fair, as well. I was astonished in 1983 when a large SF publicity program chose twenty books for maximum exposure promotion by the UK Book Board. While it seems reasonable that the British would push their own authors, to the tune of 40% of the list, three of the eight were dead (none of the Americans were), and no British author who emerged after 1965 was represented. Contrast the Americans on the list, which included Wolfe, Bishop, Cherryh, Donaldson and me. To me this betrays an appalling lack of faith among UK publishers in the "legs" of their own recent worthy authors. Surely a Watson or Priest novel could have been used. This attitude spells hard times for the newer writers, and may well mean the UK is eating its seed corn.

RIDERS OF THE LIVING WAGE

This would be a pity, for if this essay has seemed rather dour, I should end by expressing my great respect for British SF. Considering their numbers, British authors are enormously effective and influential among American authors such as myself.

Perhaps its most underrated figure is Bob Shaw, British, like James White, because of his northern Irish heritage. He has steadily considered a wide range of problems, venturing into both the galaxy and the human soul with genuine intelligence. His *Ground Zero Man* I still remember vividly. Now, like Aldiss with *Helliconia*, he has set out on a multiple-book, big-scope hard-SF project, with *The Ragged Astronauts* and *The Wooden Spaceships*. These occur in a universe where pi is exactly 3.0, a witty dodge allowing rubber science (and perhaps also a reference to the attempt by the Tennessee legislature decades ago to make such a convenience into law).

Brian Aldiss is a remarkable man, a sort of UK Fred Pohl—unashamed of his pulpy origins, wide-ranging in his contacts, an enthusiastic anthologist, an effective advocate in the larger world—though with an innate literary sense more experimental and broad. Some in the USA feared he had gone into decline after the New Wave, but the *Helliconia* series has been a big success here, reviving interest, and proving that Aldiss is capable of great work.

The most madcap, daring figure to emerge since 1970 is Ian Watson. His first book burst upon us, and for a while he seemed bound to repeat the same themes, but lately he has displayed innovation and developing craft.

Barrington Bayley has been spinning clever, idea-heavy tales for a long time without great notice—mostly, I suspect, because they are so simply told. An American counterpart has arisen, Rudy Rucker, who brings more education to the same territory.

Among the newer writers I like Rob Holdstock's earth imagery and Andy Stephenson has displayed promising beginnings. David Langford's *The Space Eater* showed an unusual balance of wit and scientific knowledge that could lead to great things. Philip Mann has created powerful, brutal novels, most recently *Pioneers*. Ian McDonald has suddenly appeared, a stylistically advanced imagination just finding his themes. Though living in the US, Londoner Sheila Finch's novels clearly have a British flavor; she is one of the few women SF writers writing scientifically sophisticated SF. At the other pole, Gwyneth Jones' fictional voyages through far future landscapes seem to echo today's more exotic Earthly cultures, verging powerfully into fantasy when the going gets rough.

So there seems ample talent available in England to continue the grand tradition. And the old modes still prosper. James White continues to offer solid, thoughtful work. John Brunner, the most American-like of the major British authors, continues to produce solid novels.

M. John Harrison carries on with technicolor celebrations of entropy. As a physical idea, entropy is subtle; it plays an important role in cosmology, and its aspects are still being explored. Little of this has penetrated to the literary consciousness, and particularly not to those still enamored of it in SF. There is still fertile ground there for someone, but it demands some homework. For

example, the recent explorations of self-organizing systems in physics and cellular biology contradict the easy oversimplifications of the entropy-lovers. Indeed, British physicist Freeman Dyson has extensively explored the very long-range struggle of life forms against entropic losses in an ever-expanding universe. No UK SF writers have used this grand subject for more than its wan tones and imagery. This is a striking neglect.

FICTIONS AS IMAGES

The central question is whether the newer writers can carry typical British concerns into new territory without themselves merely scratching out an existence in the shadows of their forefathers. So: what is essential about the British flavor of the genre?

There is a single characteristic which denotes much that is best in British SF—the search for the striking image. Descending from Wellsian scuttling crabs and stalking Martians, these aim at evoking the greatness of possibility in a single defining moment. Clarke is the best practitioner of this art, which may explain why his fiction works well in film. We remember his work through pictures—the perfect and ancient metropolis of *The City and the Stars*, a descent into the airy ecology of *A Meeting With Medusa*, the lingering strangeness of *Rendezvous With Rama*, and the iconography of the 2001 novels.

Writers as diverse as Richard Cowper and Ballard and Bob Shaw frame novels to highlight memorable pictures. In his *100 Best SF Novels* David Pringle bases his argument for including *Orbitsville* on a quoted passage which is engaging but scientifically wonky.

The preferred images are, as usual, symbols of grand, lost pasts or unknown immensities. This will probably mark the most easily exportable British work in the future, too.

I expect less a new literary movement in England's future than gradual evolution away from tony postures evoked to deal with the fall of empire. How long this will take is hard to say. Decades, certainly.

British SF is an arena in which European and

American attitudes can find expression and meet head on. It can look in both directions, east and west, and may be most important for that central fact. Indeed, Huxley and Orwell may be finally most important for their work which has this aspect. British SF grows more important as the western cultures come under greater pressure.

To take advantage of this, though, British critics and writers alike must become more acquainted with the larger reaches of world literature. Their straitlaced styles and domestic concerns do not travel well. A common complaint about English SF is that it always seems to have a cozy, kitchen feel. Seldom do the authors seem to have read, say, Kundera or Marquez. They also know little of American literature, its styles and assumptions, and display little of the range their ex-colony cousins can use.

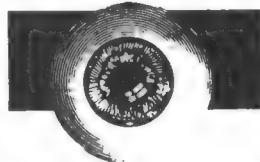
Though *Interzone* makes much of its *avant garde* posture, its letter column reveals a readership often unable to recognize literary modes outside the warmed-over New Wave thread. To take just one point, British criticism persists in mistaking the American imagery of the wilderness for the more politically charged (and pseudo-British) context of the frontier and empire. Merrie England dwindled at the time of Shakespeare. Our wilderness lies within our immediate past, and all the fever-bright iconography it birthed still animates us. That is why, to us, UK writers often seem to be rechewing the gray gruel of classic empire, without understanding how the world has changed.

There will always be conflict about the aims and methods of Anglo-American SF, which the continental Europeans, isolated in their German or French or Russian, still seem to perceive as the core of the field. And we heirs of this grand language, the largest and most complex in history, will always share it somewhat uneasily. But we should remember that the sincerest friend of a literature is its most incisive critic. ●

*The multi-facted Benford should be familiar to all. His essay, poetry and short stories have appeared in countless publications. His latest novel is **Great Sky River**.*

SF EYE #1, February 1987. Cyberpunk issue: Interviews with William Gibson and Bruce Sterling, a Cyberpunk Panel featuring John Shirley, Jack Williamson, Norman Spinrad and Gregory Benford, Plus Articles and Columns by John Kessel, Ted White, Bruce Sterling—and more.

SF EYE #2, August 1987. Includes the special Phillip K. Dick section featuring unpublished writings by PKD, an interview, and much more. Also, an in-depth interview with Lucius Shepard, articles and columns by John Shirley, Bruce Sterling and Rudy Rucker—and more.



BACK ISSUES

Send to: SF EYE
P.O. Box 43244
Washington, DC
20010-9244

SF EYE #3, March 1988. The special oversized (11" by 14") Fiction Issue. Includes fiction by Ian Watson, Charles Sheffield, Paul Di Filippo, John Shirley, and others. Also a cover by J.K. Potter, an interview with Samuel R. Delany, Bruce Sterling's column, and the usual reviews, comics, art and photos.

Issues #1 and #2 are \$3.00 each
Issue #3 is \$4.00

Please add \$1.50 per magazine
for postage and handling.

"Is it very long?" Alice asked, for she had heard a good deal of poetry that day.

"It's long," said the Knight, "but it's very, very beautiful. Everybody that hears me sing it—either it brings the tears into their eyes, or else—"

"Or else what?" said Alice, for the Knight had made a sudden pause.

"Or else it doesn't, you know. The name of the song is called *Haddocks' Eyes*."

"Oh, that's the name of the song, is it?" Alice said, trying to feel interested.

"No, you don't understand," the Knight said, looking a little vexed. "That's what the name is called. The name really is *The Aged Man*."

"Then I ought to have said 'That's what the song is called'?" Alice corrected herself.

"No, you oughtn't: that's quite another thing! The song is called *Ways and Means*: but that's only what it's called, you know!"

"Well, what is the song, then?" said Alice, who was by this time completely bewildered.

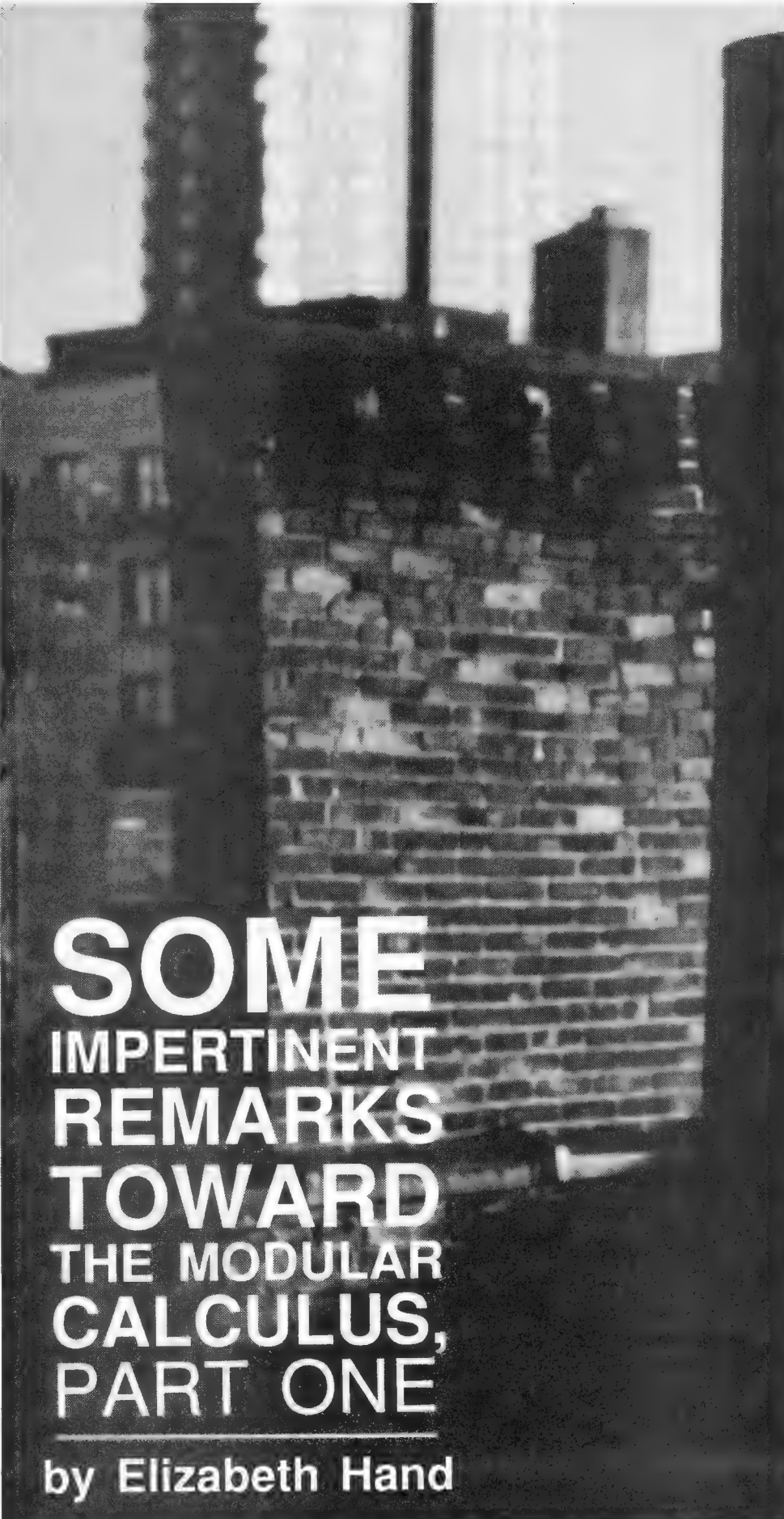
"I was coming to that," the Knight said. "The song really is *A-sitting On A Gate*: and the tune's my own invention."

And came down in Kolhari:

The port city in the midst of empire once called Neveryóna, Transpoté: across never, across when, a distant once; far never and far where—none of which, alas, helps us to locate the actual heart of this city, these books . . .

APPENDIX A: MANY HISTORIES

Delany terms the four volumes which comprise *Return to Neveryón* a mega-fantasy, a



SOME IMPERTINENT REMARKS TOWARD THE MODULAR CALCULUS, PART ONE

by Elizabeth Hand



PHOTO BY ROBERT MORALES © 1988

work of paraliterature—which catapults it from the backyard barbecue of conventional SF into that literary garden party where the names of Foucault and Levi-Strauss and Calvino are more likely to be uttered than those of Heinlein or Gene Wolfe or even Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

So we have this mega-fantasy, this "tale of civilization's economic origins . . ."

A tale of a former slave known as the Liberator, who leads a revolt of slaves across the country known as Nevèryon.

A tale of barbarian princes and masked thieves, mummers and murderers; of the Child Empress Ynelgo and the imaginary Lord Aldamir; of capitalist merchants and careless smugglers and a capricious magician whose power lies in words; of the old tale-teller Venn and her marvelous inventions (writing and weaving and a magical fountain among them); of the entrepreneur Madame Keyne and the plucky young dragon-rider Pryn and a one-eyed slave named Noyeed.

A tale of civilization and semiotics and sado-masochism; of cuneiform and cryptography and the Modular Calculus; of art and artifice and AIDS.

What kind of a tale is this?

Not a tale at all, really. A history; many histories.

There is more than one history of the world, John Crowley suggests in *Aegypt*. There are at least two: the one remembered and the one forgotten; and probably hundreds, perhaps thousands, of others.

There is more than one history of our own time, Delany asserts in *Return to Nevèryon*. These are the histories that Delany records in the Nevèryóna cycle: tales of the beginnings of civilization that mirror our own time's organizing mythos; the histories of these tales and even the histories of the fictitious monographs written by an imaginary archaeologist and mathematician about these tales.

Sound confusing?

It is.

But also brilliant, funny, erotic and beautiful.

As well as dull, pedantic, academic and rhetorical.

(You see, there is more than one *Return to Nevèryon* as well.)

APPENDIX B: THE WORLD'S A MESS, IT'S IN MY BOOK

In the lengthy course of *Return to Nevèryon*, Delany's ever-present auctorial voice informs us that the work in our hands is "a document of our times, thank you very much. And a carefully prepared one, too . . ."

Yes, well . . .

Such remarks, such self-description and self-indulgence, are helpful in their way—even entertaining, up to a point. Beyond that point, they are unneeded and unwanted and unconstructive. In fact, they are deconstructive. They break *Return to Nevèryon* down into its constituent metaphors.

He pursues the deconstruction of his own prose with a kind of obsessive glee.

Delany knows this. He pursues the deconstruction of his own prose with a kind of obsessive glee. Few readers, probably, will share his obsession. Delany knows this too. He doesn't care. He has prepared his "document" carefully. Thank you very much.

But no thank you.

Delany makes it clear that this world and this work is his very own Meccano kit, to construct and deconstruct at his pleasure; readers are invited to play with it, but only by his rules. The constant auctorial interruptions and indifference to the conventional reader's desire for plot and mystery and emotional involvement seem, after a while, very much like disdain for those readers. In the

persona of K. Leslie Steiner the author defends this puzzling work against the mewling demands of the marketplace and

the commercial reader (not you, of course; not me), who presumably consumes text only for story, is assumed to stand deaf to style, and is thought only to applaud the endlessly repeated pornographies of action and passion that, for all their violences, still manage to pander to an astonishingly untroubled acceptance of the personal and political status quo.

But isn't there some common ground between a visceral good read and one that often collapses into plodding didacticism?

Throughout the work Delany displays a dizzying array of ideas and information, models and mirrors; spins from the rough stuff that is sword and sorcery fine shining threads that pattern a world that fairly makes your head ache with its glittering complexity. But the blurring of one narrative voice into another, the discordant shift from action to rhetoric that occurs again and again throughout the books weakens their impact by shaking the reader from "the vivid and continuous dream" that John Gardner so eloquently states is the object of all great fiction.

Ah, but this is *metafiction!**—that is, not "real" fiction at all. Deconstructive fiction at that; and so all bets are off. Delany underscores this point by mentioning Diderot (*Ceci n'est pas un conte*) and Magritte (*Ceci n'est pas une pipe*), pausing to allow Constant Reader ample opportunity to fail in the next line:

This is not a novel.

At the very least, this is not a fantasy novel, despite the reviewers' comments; despite the Bantam Science Fiction imprint (but Constant Reader has deduced that this is not a science fiction novel, either); despite the author's reputation as a practitioner of "literary" science fiction. It is not intended to be read as one would read *Nova* or even *Dhalgren*; but since there's no disclaimer

* For this article I have used John Gardner's definitions of deconstruction and metafiction, as suggested in *The Art of Fiction*. Namely, that "Deconstruction is the practice of taking language apart, or taking works of art apart, to discover their unacknowledged inner workings"; and that metafiction is "fiction that, both in style and theme, investigates fiction."

to that effect on the book's spine some of Delany's readers may be more nonplussed by the work than not. And I wonder how many of those readers who keep up with the more interesting developments in post-modern literature have discovered these books between de Lint and Del Rey on the Sci-Fi shelves?

Metafiction's charms are cerebral; the pleasures of *Return to Nevèrÿon*, for many readers, akin to those of completing the London *Financial Times* Crossword and Cryptic. Metafiction acts as a panacea for conventional fiction: "one way of undermining fiction's harmful effects", as Gardner puts it. And that is just what is wrong with much of *Return to Nevèrÿon*: the pill to be swallowed, the lesson to be learned, is inescapable. From beneath the bright covers we hear not the faint and fabulous retort of dragon's wings, but the dreary sigh of textbooks swishing open.

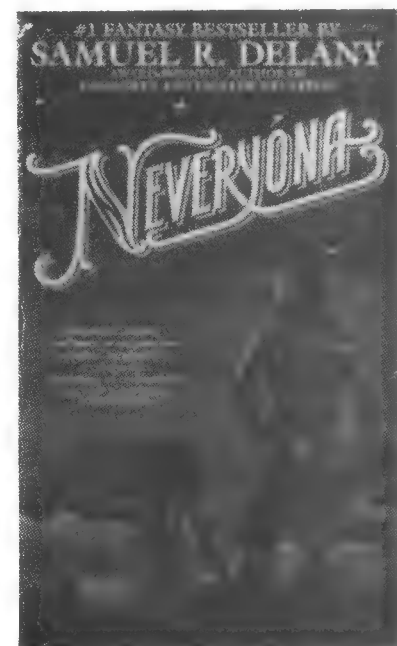
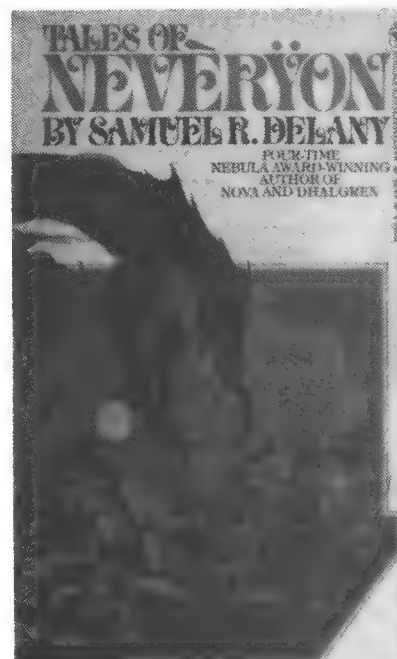
The tug-of-war between two impulses—the writer as shaman and the writer as academic—underlies much of Delany's later fiction. *Dhalgren* stands as the most stunning example of the former sort of literary thaumaturgy: a true *fin-de-siècle* novel, a nightmarish palimpsest of The City that may be the best piece of fiction ever written about The Sixties. The underrated *Triton*, on the other hand, is a more controlled work that successfully uses both impulses as it charts the gulf between obsession and madness. But *Return to Nevèrÿon* founders somewhere on the shoals of Academe. The authoritarian impulse overwhelms the artist; the professor repeatedly hushes the reader just when she is excitedly swept up by the story. The author claims that the cycle can be viewed as a Child's Garden of Semiotics, a sort of deconstructive MacGuffey's Primer disguised as a sword and sorcery series. But on its most accessible level *Return to Nevèrÿon* is a work of fiction that is puzzlingly aloof. The contemporary philosopher Paul Weiss writes:

A work of art is an object with which we can live for a while. It does not claim to record, to report or to represent the familiar things of daily life. Nor does it depend for its being or value on its power to communicate, to educate, to stimulate, or to please. It does these things, and often does them especially well. But it does them best when it is accepted for what it is, as a self-sufficient reality. He who deals with a work of art as a vehicle of pleasure or instruction stresses its practical not its aesthetic side, and inevitably obscures its nature as a work of art.

By sacrificing emotion for instruction and reducing his characters to signs and symbols, Delany deprives the reader of the pleasure of losing herself in his fictional world. This may strengthen the novels' appeal as a fabulist textbook on semiotics; but this same authoritarian impulse robs the work of its incantatory power and ultimately weakens it as fiction.

The four volumes that comprise the Nevèrÿon series—*Tales of Nevèrÿon*, *Neverÿona*, *Flight from Nevèrÿon* and *The Bridge of Lost Desire*—encompass twenty-three tales and six appendices, including the chilling AIDS exegesis "The Tale of Plagues and Carnivals" that comprises Appendix A in *Flight from Nevèrÿon*. Many of the same characters appear from tale to tale, with the points of view and emphasis of the text shifting from one story to the next. The stories resist summary: there is no fixed order in which they should be read, and a reader's comprehension of the characters' motivations and actions deepens with each successive tale. Delany states that "In the traditional paraliterary story/novel series, each new tale critiques the tale (or tales) before it." And the books can be read on different levels as well: as a kind of sophisticated revisionist history, with primitive Neverÿona mirroring our own culture; as allegory or fable exploring sexual and social domination and submission; as an interlocking series of feminist myths; as an examination of the myths and models and symbols that an artist uses to re-create a civilization or society.

Oh yes; and it can be read as an epic fantasy, four books firmly rooted in the tradition of sword and sorcery; although it is at this simplest and most straightforward level that the books are least successful. All the traditional elements of fiction are there: character, plot, theme, style. But the whole does not cohere as harmoniously as a reader might hope. The balance is skewed in favor of theme, the exploration of the origins of culture and the process by which an artist models his times:



What she had sensed . . . was that the world in which images occurred was opaque, complete, and closed, though what gave it its weight and meaning was that this was not true of the space of examples, samples, symbols, models, expressions, reasons, representations and the rest—yet that everything and anything could be an image of everything and anything—the true of the false, the imaginary of the real, the useful of the useless, the helpful of the hurtful—was what gave such strength to the particular types of images that went by all those other names; that it was the organized coherence of them all which made distinguishing them possible.

This is a long way from the works of Robert Howard and Fritz Leiber and C.L. Moore that might stand as its literary predecessors.

The pivotal character in the cycle is Gorgik the Liberator, "thick-hewn mine slave whose prowess defies the mighty" (backjacket quote from the original Bantam paperback edition of *Tales of Nevèrÿon*). Gorgik rises from mine slave to paramour of a jaded Vizerine to free imperial officer. He leads a successful revolt against slavery and ultimately serves as state minister and councilman of the Child Empress Ynelgo (whose reign is intense and interminable). We follow Gorgik from the obsidian pits to the High Court; watch him fight, rally his forces, and fuck his way from the dragon-haunted Falthas to the abandoned castle of the imaginary Lord Aldamir.

But mostly, we listen to him talk, and talk, and talk.

Because Gorgik's (many) adventures are heavily larded with monologues: pages of monologues, long monologues, on everything from the changes wrought in a society shifting from a subsistence to a market economy to recurring discussion of the intricate cultural web that snares both freedmen and slaves in a land that permits slavery. And Gorgik meditates endlessly on "the slippery meaning of the iron ring", the unsettling sexual images reflected by these slave-master relationships, the specter of sado-masochism stepping from the looking-glass to take its place in this brave old world that (ultimately) abolishes slave labor. Each age gets the art that it deserves; so too does each culture create its own sexual *daemon*. In forcing us to contemplate the subtle process by which fetish and obsession are borne and enacted in Nevèrÿona, Delany throws up yet another pier-glass to show us our own time:

If you don't look closely at what's in the mirror, you might not even notice it's any different from the thing in front of it.

Alas, Gorgik is not the only person given to such lengthy introspection. Nearly everyone in Nevèrÿon breaks character at some point, and in so doing becomes

**Eventually
this just
grows
wearisome—
like watching
a precocious
and self-
absorbed
child build
and destroy a
precariously
balanced
house of
cards over
and over and
over again.**

merely emblematic (an extreme example being the entrepreneurial merchant Madame Keyne, whose very name echoes that of economist John Maynard Keynes). This is often a problem with speculative fiction in general, and bad SF in particular; but the sort of literary tokenism Delany practices in the Nevèrÿona books is both purposeful and playful, if no less irksome for its author's conscious intent. It is unsettling for a reader to hear the obsidian pit-slave and revolutionary hero Gorgik (a character encumbered with all the weighty trappings that the words *slave* and *hero* carry) suddenly declaim:

. . . But as we make our demands in the name of that meeting point between ethics and art, we overlook that both radical and conservative versions are no less concoctions than the concoction we would have them replace: one has a real queen and an unreal liberator, the other has a real slave and an unreal queen. And it is the notions of reality and unreality themselves which finally become suspect when either one is mirrored in art, much less when both are mirrored together.

It is particularly jarring when other characters indulge in this sort of philosophical digression, with no great discernible difference in the timbre of narrative voice:

. . . All instinct tells us: one of [the reasons for speaking the truth as opposed to lying] must be art, the one that demonstrates a clear concern for the detail of what it represents that is finally one with its concern for the detail of its own material construction, so that either concern, whether for representation or just skill in the maneuvering of its own material, might replace the other as justification for our contemplation without the object's abnegating its claim to a realism including and transcending either accuracy or craft . . .

—the Earl Jue-Grutn in *Tales of Nevèrÿon*

As I've grown older, however, I've had my anxious moments. The anxiety arrives along with a kind of alternative dream, the vision of a world arranged very differently . . . where no privileges such as mine exist, nor such hardship as theirs: rather it is a dream of an equitable division of goods and services into which all would be born, within which all would be raised, and the paths from one point to the other would be set out by like and dislike, temperament and desire, rather than inscribed on a mystified map whose blotted and improperly marked directions are all plotted between poverty and power, wealth and weakness.

—Madame Keyne, *Tales of Nevèrÿon*

Eventually this just grows wearisome—like watching a precocious and self-absorbed child build and destroy a precariously balanced house of cards over and over and over again. What *Return to Nevèrÿona* lacks above all else is a sense of humor—the saving grace of such

similarly self-referential works as Italo Calvino's *If On a Winter's Night a Traveller* or Flann O'Brien's *The Third Policeman*. *Neveryóna's* self-analysis is so self-important, the endless appendices so smug—bordering on the precious—that Delany sabotages his own effort even while he is seemingly booby-trapping it against those who would dare wish for the "pornographies of action and passion", and warmth and humor—everything that one might hope to find in a novel by Samuel R. Delany.

APPENDIX C: BEAUTY LIES

But what most people mean by beauty is really a kind of aesthetic acceptability, not so much character as a lack of it, a set of features and lineaments that hide their history, that suggest history itself does not exist. But the template by which we recognize the features and forms in the human body that cause the heart to stop, threatening to spill us over into the silence of death—that is drawn on another part of the soul entirely.

—Samuel R. Delany, *Neveryóna*

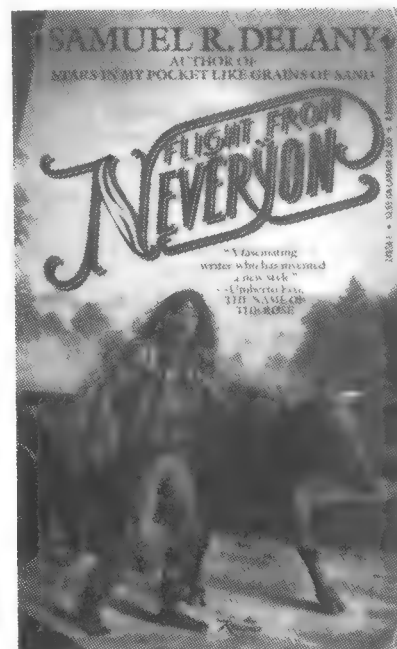
Much of Delany's fiction explores obsessions, sexual or intellectual. Few writers (Nabokov, Scott Spencer, John Fowles come to mind) are as adept at evoking the states of obsessive love and desire and pointing out the ominous shadows of the Castle Perilous where those who would pursue their obsessions are imprisoned.

But obsessions compel us precisely because they *can't* be successfully divined. Even the most accurate fictional map of the human soul will be at best two-dimensional, and no matter how great an artist is, he will never actually create a living breathing human being from his canvas or word processor. To invoke the compulsive madness of a Humbert Humbert or Othello or David Axelrod involves treading a very fine line between clinical analysis and pathos.

Delany has done this successfully, of course. *Triton* is about a man obsessed. *Dhalgren* shows us the ruins of an entire city gone over the edge, and sexual obsession runs like a fever through *Stars in My Pocket Like Grains of Sand*, the first half of the unfinished diptych that forms an intriguing science fiction counterpart to the Neveryóna series. These works limn the sharp edges of madness and ecstasy without explaining them away. In *Return to Neveryón* Delany insists upon endless analysis of the minutiae that propel love and lust, social liberation and sexual dominance.

Nearly everyone in the series obsessively pursues some wraith. The one-eyed slave Noyeed seeks Gorgik, the man who raped him in the obsidian pits and later saved his life. A feckless smuggler searches for the Liberator across the countryside and the Bridge of Lost Desire, where he meets a one-eyed man wearing the iron collar. An aging actor muses upon his own youthful infatuation with an unnamed male partner. A young girl follows and joins forces with the masked swordswoman Raven. Raven fancies and saves the life of a young smuggler looking for Gorgik. And Gorgik himself stalks those who wear the iron collar, both to liberate them and to play at sexual enslavement.

Intellectual passions fuel these tales as well: Madame Keyne's consuming interest in building a New Market; Gorgik's obsession with the sexual mutability of the slave's collar and all it represents; the young dragon-rider Pryn's fascination with power and those who wield it. But instead of allowing the story to be propelled by these plots and their intricate intertwinings, Delany imposes his own commentary via his characters, the omniscient narrator, and the inevitable appendices by K. Leslie Steiner and S.L. Kermit. This kind of auctorial interruption is a given in metafiction; the constant twitching of the shimmering curtain to reveal the little man running the works, showing us how each effect is produced, is a mainstay of deconstruction. I suspect a reader either has a taste for this or not; but certain works of paraliterature do manage to engage the reader's emotions and intellect at once. Nabokov's *Ada*; John Barth's *Chimera*; Flann O'Brien's *The Third Policeman*; I would even add John Crowley's *Aegypt*, a post-modern fantasy with enough energy and metaphysical yearning to jump-start a dozen stalled metafables. Where *Return to Neveryón* comes up short is in the author's insistence on *explaining* every detail, pointing out the symbolism behind the collar, the flying dragons; even the



imaginative pun between Gorgik's name and the word *gorgi* used by a barbarian tribe to designate genitalia. This running commentary, coupled with the prominence of a single auctorial voice, makes for a curious emotional detachment from characters and events that are, for the most part, larger than life, and which should inspire similarly grand emotional recognition in the reader. Instead some of the tales fall flat, weighted by all those symbols and the author's designs. Weiss says:

A good deal of the sweep, the sensuous tone, the qualitative feel, the meaning and the beauty which art exhibits, will be lost if one is not willing to lose oneself within it.

If one is willing but *unable* to lose oneself in a novel, the author has failed—at least on that level where we feel most comfortable judging a work of fiction.

Still, many wonders await the patient reader of these books. Bold and utterly charming female characters dart through the tales— young Pryn, who rides one of the clumsy flying dragons and walks in the shadow of Gorgik, the Big Man; the entrepreneur Madame Keyne and her lover Radiant Jade; the marvelous and murderous girl Ini. Old Venn, tale-teller and inventor, who teaches children the first alphabet and devises a new way of making cloth. Mysterious mercenary Raven, a Fantomas with a two-bladed sword who lends her prowess to Gorgik's cause and muses wonderingly upon the number of wise and pretty men in the world. As a chapbook of feminist fables *Return to Neverÿon* succeeds wonderfully, a provocative revisionist history wherein the women shape tales as sturdy and enduring as the clay pots they fire.

Delany does not merely reverse traditional gender roles to highlight his feminist mythos. Playfully he stands Freudian myth on its head; shows us Woman as Inventor, Capitalist, Mercenary, Bard. He retells the story of creation, wherein god forms Man by beating the first woman Eif'h in punishment. In *Tales of Neverÿon* he introduces us to a tribe known as the Rulvyn. Through them he rephrases a well-known anthropological incident known as the Stone Ax Syndrome, wherein the entire sociosexual order of an actual tribe was destroyed by the careless introduction of metal axes by well-intentioned missionaries. These intriguing incidents linger in the mind precisely because Delany resists the temptation to explain them to us. As recounted they have the simplicity and magic and earthiness of old German folk-tales. In all of *Neverÿon* these stories come closest to evoking a true sense of the marvelous—which is, after all, one reason for reading fantasy or science fiction.

Because for all the semiotic legerdemain, the juggling of intriguing concepts and symbols, these books don't impart a sense of the *magic* of this other world;

**The
unyielding
control that
the author
exerts over
every page of
this work
leaves scant
opportunity
for the reader
to bring her
own
interpretations**

nor do they show us the splendor and terrors of our own, as does *Dhalgren*. Delany's prose style uses an accretion of myriad tiny details to create a scene: the flash of sunset upon the ocean that for a moment produces the illusion of a drowned city, the soft wrinkled texture of a dried fruit resembling a dragon's egg. In his science fiction novels this produces an almost cinematic clarity. In *Dhalgren* the same precision has a hallucinogenic effect, as a powerful microscope focused upon an ordinary fingerprint reveals dizzying whorls and colors. Yet in *Neverÿon* this meticulous scrutiny often robs the fabulous landscape of its glamour and subtlety, producing instead a photorealistic effect that seems at odds with its subject. Delany is aiming to create "a model of late twentieth century (mostly urban) America"; but a stronger juxtaposition of the fantastic and the everyday would seem to serve his purpose better. The unyielding control that the author exerts over every page of this work leaves scant opportunity for the reader to bring her own interpretations to it. Delany succeeds at his own goal of creating a model of our

times that is "rich, eristic and contestatory (as well as documentary)"; but the documentary effect is achieved by sacrificing the reader's sense of wonder. The author has done all the imaginative work for her.

APPENDIX D: CONTAGION AS METAPHOR

For the mind, is the possibility of erring not rather the contingency of good?

—Andre Breton, *The First Surrealist Manifesto*

One difficulty with any post-modern work is that, removed from its contemporary referents, what once seemed fresh and startling and true is often reduced to mere archness, an interesting frame for a canvas that has crumbled with the passing of time. "The Tale of Plagues and Carnivals" is a long, harrowing dialogue on AIDS that alternates between glimpses of the disease's devastation in our world and a series of vignettes depicting the effects of a similar illness in *Neverÿon*. As might be expected, the scenes played out in present-day New York have a gripping intensity and documentary quality lacking in the *Neverÿon* segments, despite the author's insistence that the tale be read as "a work of imagination; and to the extent it is a document, largely what it documents is misinformation, rumor, and wholly untested guesses . . ." Taken out of its context as a work of fiction depicting "a limited social section of New York City during 1982 and 1983" the piece stands up surprisingly well: its gritty hustlers the literary descendants of the losers who populate Hugh Selby's *Last Exit to Brooklyn*, and not too far removed from characters we've met before in other Delany novels. But despite Delany's quoting Susan Sontag's "Diseases should not become social metaphors," this section with its



PHOTO BY ROBERT MUNDAL ES 1088

parallel plagues is most unsettling precisely because it *does* deal with AIDS in both a metaphorical and allegorical manner—in addition to displaying an alarming medical naivete (most of it was written before the discovery of the HTLV-3 virus in 1984). Set within the framework of the rest of *Return to Neveryon*, "The Tales of Plagues and Carnivals" feels disturbingly out of place, like finding one of the disease's victims on display in a sideshow tent at a travelling fair. It's not that the subject of HLV is either too controversial or beyond Delany's skills; it just seems inappropriate within the context of this "set of elaborate and ingenuous deconstructions" that it is more its author's plaything than anything else. If we are not to read this as metaphor, or allegory, or fable, how *are* we to read it? Certainly not for sheer entertainment; certainly not for the facts that it misrepresents. And while "The Tale of Plagues and Carnivals" is haunting (and other readers may find it an effective evocation and "document" of "a limited social section of New York City during 1982 and 1983") I feel that with all the best intentions and up-to-date medical information in the world, this attempt to allegorize the disease is simply ill-conceived.

APPENDIX E: "THE MAP IS NOT THE TERRITORY"

"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less."

"The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things."

"The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master—that's all."

Delany makes it clear through the many appendices to *Return to Neveryon* that this work is to be taken very much on its own terms: our conven-

tional criteria for evaluating a novel or a traditional sword and sorcery tale à la Moorcock or Howard can't be applied to these stories. The fact that the narrative is often turgid, the characters one-dimensional, the appendices often intimidatingly theoretical and convoluted, is irrelevant. Delany has produced an abstract on "our own age's conception of historical possibility", a work most accurately defined by what it is *not*—

Not a novel, a conventional history, or "a portrait of some imagined historical culture." Not a fiction of character but of ideas, demanding and involuted.

"... one simply cannot measure weight, coldness, the passage of time, and the brightness of fire all on the same scale," says the eponymous protagonist of "The Tale of old Venn."

On one level these books can only be measured by their author's criteria; and Delany considers the series to have successfully achieved its goal of illustrating "a dark *unheimlich* comedy about the intricate relations of sex, narrative, and power." For the reader willing to forgo the customary pleasures of fiction and surrender her own imagination to that of a brilliant if exigent *auteur*, reading *Return to Neveryon* can provide a provocative experience.

But final judgement of a fiction lies with its readers, who complete the task begun by the author. For a work to live it must be read, and hopefully loved. *Return to Neveryon* commands a reader's respect and intellect, but little more. And Neveryóna itself seems destined to be found not in that well-thumbed atlas holding maps of Urth and Middle Earth and Narnia and Barsoom but in its dusty companion volume, along with Islandia and Erewhon and Utopia—places visited occasionally by academics, but never really inhabited by readers. One can only hope that Delany the academic goes on sabbatical soon . . .



日本



1988 甲



TOKYO COLLAGE

BY WILLIAM GIBSON

Morning in Ark Hills: slick white towers above a vast complex of plaza-space. The room on the executive floor of the ANA Hotel is finished in tones of beige and gray. Press the button that closes the curtains and this might be New York, London, Paris. I open the minibar fridge and find Kirin lager, canned coffee, and something called . . . Pocari Sweat. The dimensions of the can are alien: too tall, too narrow. Manufactured by a pharmaceutical company. It tastes vaguely like watery synthetic grapefruit juice.

The can of cold Blue Mountain coffee, cream and sugar, is better. As the curtains track open on the city and the distant Bay, Tokyo rises in steel and glass from the shadows of Edo and Nippon's floating world.

Cab to Akihabara, the retail electronics market.

The cab is extraordinarily clean; it looks as though someone's wiped it down to remove incriminating

prints. The seats have starched lace coverlets and the driver's white gloves are spotless. The streets, too, exhibit an unexpected Zurich tidiness, but the tacky retail glitz of Akihabara is reassuring: the hum of biz like a defective fluorescent tube.

Denizens of the Sprawl and 21st-century Chiba would be right at home here, cruising the narrow mazes of hardware, past gray-suited KGB men shopping for something novel in semiconductors. Merchants tend their trays of candy-bright capacitors and gumdrop LEDs, raw microelectronics.

One stall sells vacuum tubes, hand-wrought tech of a peculiarly Victorian delicacy, capable of a wonderful hearth-glow now unknown to many children (and almost forgotten by many adults). The Soviet Union still manufactures tubes; is there really a brand called VIRGIN COMMIE, or is this a vagary of Japanese English?

On the expressway, another cab. The love hotels flash past. They have names like "Queen

Elizabeth" and "Freedom Shower American."

The Anglophone visitor and the purely decorative use of English. A weird sensation during the trip's third day, when jetlag and exhaustion synch into a nagging sense that one is, somehow, almost, *in America*. Tired eyes try to read the passing streetscape as home.

In this state, the hyper-Western modernity of an area like Akasaka seems to bulk solidly behind a flickering overlay of *foreign detail*. The *gaijin* eye yearns to relax into the shapes of banks virtually invisible in their familiarity, the comfortably "correct" width of a major avenue, the Nissan cars one expects in London or Vancouver, the symbols of the alphabet.

But pieces of "foreignness" impact continually, each one triggering a minute jolt of adrenalin: the simple elegance of the wooden braces used to train young trees, pregnant-looking payphones color-coded hot pink and lime green, wing-mirrors strangely positioned on front fenders of every vehicle, parking garages where cars rise out

of sight on a kind of ferris-wheel...

**"FAVORITE AMUSEMENTS
so many creeps in Hollywood
In Ideal day for camping
CLEAR AND COOL**

*We are commune with
NATURE AND FRESH
professional scuba outfits"*

—T-shirt from Osaka

Staring down at the dark grounds of the Imperial Palace from the observation deck of the Shinjuku NS Building. The Palace grounds by night are a black hole at the city's core. No light escapes to join the dense bright urban galaxy that spreads in every direction. Imagining vast megastructures surrounding and abutting the Palace grounds, returning a paradoxical privacy to this mystery at Tokyo's heart.

Turn from the window, walk to a railing; stare down the well of the building's atrium; on the far floor, tethered balloons and robot constructions resemble the toys they are. Children swarm there, their clothes bright specks of color.

The elevator down is vibration-free and utterly silent.

Underground, swept along by the determined pace of Tokyo's pedestrian traffic, through broad avenues that open into department stores, subways . . . Silent derelicts sort carefully through discarded cardboard on the margins of the flowing crowd. Even here, the homeless are a fact, simple as rain.

In Roppongi, the outcall massage services post tiny full-color posters, the size of baseball cards, on phone booths. Someone translates for me: "Open kimono style, no obi," "Young brides," "Recent widows."

Kabukicho. The incredible brightness of the narrow streets. Porno shops and massage parlors.

Snapshot of the Hanazono Shrine, like a ghost drifting above the neon haze.

Into Golden Street, Goruden-gai.

Goruden-gai floats in its own strange dream. The simplicity of the illuminated signs, after the fluorescent blitz of Kabukicho, lends the lane a fairy stillness.

Tiny, closet-sized bars line Goruden-gai like Cornell boxes.

"Gaijin lady dance free in Roppongi disco."

The twin two-fold screens of Ogata Korin's *Red and White Plum Blossoms*, where a gold-dark stream is swirling.

In another hall, broad windows open onto the gunmetal Pacific in rainy afternoon light; the museum is high on a hill; entering, one ascends silent escalators through an arched passageway, to a circular hall where colors wash continually across ribs of cement reinforced with fiberglass, like some benevolent variation on the biomechanical architecture of H.R. Giger.

Gardens of moss . . .

Stillness in the ryokan beyond Atami. After Tokyo, the almost-empty room, the sound of wind.

The tatami room suspended there, just above the sea.

The telephone.

The television.

Tokyo coffee shops, like the cafes of Paris. The Japanese take coffee seriously, but the coffee shops serve a crucial social function as well, providing spaces for conversation, places to pause in the city's constant flow.

The coffee arrives with a tiny steel jigger of heavy cream for each cup.

Harajuku: distant echoes of Carnaby Street, of Kings Road. Global melange of black Dr. Martens, Levi's 501's, leather bombers, fatigue jackets. One shop offers embalmed specimens of London punk style circa 1977: a replica of Johnny Rotten's deconstructed cashmere sweater.

Across the street, a young man in mirrorshades sells imitation Zippo lighters from a stand backed with a large Nazi flag. A Zippo lighter, in context with the Swastika, suggests the James Dean cult, biker imagery, Hell's Angels. The mirrorshades, the flag, the lighters, an intricate knot of imported cultural symbols.

The idea of *orientalia*. Works of orientalia are by definition Occidental; the term implies a degree of fantasy. Exotic fantasies of the East, written, often as not, by Europeans with little or no direct experience of the Orient. The operative word: *exotic*.

To an exhibition of photographs by Mr. Ryuji Miyamoto.

Near the gallery is a building that houses a variety of educational exhibits provided by the police. I peer through plastic at neatly packaged specimens of what appears to be very pure methedrine. Above the case, a bloody *manga*-style cartoon depicts a crazed addict lopping off his child's arm with a kitchen knife. The remarkable thing, though I've been told repeatedly that there are no illicit drugs in Japan, is the fact that the drugs are actually there in the case, unguarded; in Paris or New York, they'd last about as long as a vending machine full of Suntory whiskey would last on a street corner.

Ryuji Miyamoto's photographs of Kau Kung Shing Chai are orientalia of a different order.

Working with natural light and extremely long exposures, the photographer has captured views from the almost sunless heart of a structure that seems to have been generated from a single cell. What light there is filters down past grilled balconies, barred windows, mad swooping tangles of wiring . . . The long exposures have reduced the inhabitants of the Walled City to faint blurs, ghosts on the emulsion, moving too quickly to be captured.

Asia. The dark side of the gaijin dream of Asia awaits at the foot of a runway at Hong Kong airport.

Shoal upon shoal of unlicensed dental clinics, displaying grinning dentures in Victorian fishbowls. A single naked fluorescent tube clamped to a damp concrete wall. Apartment numbers spraybombed across a rusting iron door mounted with a dragon boss. And everywhere the snaking ganglia of wiring, phone lines, plastic tubing. The City's walls are gone, demolished by the Japanese army. It looms beyond the airport like some monstrous growth of dark urban coral,

its rooftops furred with a sagging forest of television antennas, home to forty thousand people.

The very contemporary Japanese decorative style known as "Ethnic." The Ethnic style, as exemplified by the restaurant Sunda, in Shibuyaku, seems to express nostalgia both for the future and for some imaginary third world country that might vaguely resemble Cambodia. The resulting impression is very strange, as though one were undertaking simultaneous time-travel to both the future and the past, though in this case the past is as much a fiction as any imagined future.

Sunda advertises "cuisine of no country."

The structure itself seems either to be under construction or demolition, perhaps both. The effect relies heavily on paradox. Deliberate gaps in walls of coarsely trowelled concrete reveal the dark steel reinforcing-grid beneath. Outside, something that may or may not be a streetlamp seems to have toppled partially through the wall. Yet one enters through a vaguely pan-Asian temple-carving which seems to have been sawn neatly in half, perhaps with a laser; as one ascends the curving stairway to the second floor, its railing a giant loach of soldered brass, one sees terracotta walls impressed with bits of ... straw?

The waitresses wear costumes from ... no country. Their mini-skirts seem to have been cut from some Peruvian (Nepalese? Fijian?) handweave.

A toying with the possibility, no matter how remote, of losing touch with cultural roots? The Ethnic style looks back, not to Japanese tradition, but to some mythical Asian country only half-remembered, that needs *imagination*.

"We're Western," he said, under the crawling constellations of the ads, "We're Western people..."●

Bill Gibson visited Tokyo in February of 1988, and brought these impressions back with him. His latest novel, *Mona Lisa Overdrive*, will be available in this country around Halloween.



アルマジロコン9は1987年10月9日から11日まで
テキサス州オースティンはウインダム・サウス・ホテルに
おいて開催された。SFアイからはアイジパンの編集部
が参加。ここにそのもようをご報告する!

狂い咲き、サイバーパンク

G-Word Fever and beyond

——アルマジロコン9レポート

ArmadilloCon 9:a Report

by 小谷 真理

by Mari Kotani

「とにかくうまいから食ってみな」

思わずひるんだ私に、テキサスなまりのcockがそう言った。秋深いニューヨークから飛行機で約三時間。季節を逆行して、まだ夏の陽ざしのテキサス州はダラスで遅い昼食をとろうとしたときのことだ。けして食通というわけではないし、大食漢でもない、まあ平均的日本人の舌と胃は、それまでアメリカの食事を心の底から「うまい!」と思ってうけつけたことはない。お皿を見ると白い淡水魚のからあげがころころとならんでいた。「キャット・フィッシュ、ねえ」フォークをつきさし、がぶりとかみついた。味はどうあれとてもおながすいていたのだ。ひとくち食べてみて驚いた。美味しいじゃないの、これ。テーブルの向こう側でcockがにたりと笑った。……ところでキャット・フィッシュで何?なまずのことだヨ……ひええええ

ダラスでの食事のことを説明していると、ルーことルイス・シャイナーが不思議そうに尋ねた。

「日本人はなまず食べないの?」

「迷信あるからかな、うんそう、あまり聞かないね」

シャイナー夫妻は顔を見合わせた。

「ナンセンス、だね」

と、ルー。奥方のイーディスがにっこりと微笑んだ。ルイス・シャイナーといえは“Bruja”みたいな作品を書いていたから、案外迷信じみた話が好きなのかしらと思っていたけどそういうわけでもないらしい。神経もしごくまともらしく、ディレイニーからヴァーリィに話がとぶと、

「俺、ダメなんだよね、ああいうの。キモチワルイ」

ともあれ、テキサスは食べ物、異様においしい。新鮮なものがあるとい

うより、その味付けが素晴らしい。メキシコに近いせいかもしれない。そして、どういうわけか旨いメシのあるところ、美味しいSFも育まれていたりする。日本でいえばガタコンに極めてちかいノリを有する。究極の地域性ともいうべきもので結び付いたこの二つのローカルコンはそういえば地域出身の作家達とファンの間がとても近いことでもまたにているのだった。ガタコンに神林長平がいるようにアルマジロコンにはローカルコンの親玉、ブルース・スターリングが君臨してる。今回、ゲスト・オブ・オーナーであった彼は、ジェームズ・パトリック・ケリーとジョン・ケッセルのインタヴューにたとえばこんなふうに答えていた。

「クラリオン・ワークショップもよかったけどターキー・シティ（テキサスで開かれているワークショップ）のほうにより愛着を感じるな」

それで彼の第一作目はそのターキーシティに捧げられているのだそうだ。作家自身による新作の朗読という企画が多いのもアルマジロコンの特徴で、作家の朗読を一心に聞かせるファンダムの姿は感動的。昨年は、ギブスンの *Mona Lisa Overdrive* の一部が、披露されたという。こういう企画は日本ではあまり見られない。ちなみにスターリング今回の朗読は、*Islands in the Net*（長編小説の一部みたい）。勿論、大盛況。改めて彼の人気のほどをみせつけられた。

日本であまり見られない企画といえば、ファン対プロ・クイズ合戦というのがあった。プロ側は、ブルース・スターリング、ジンジャー・ブキャナン、カレン・ジョイ・ファウラー、ジョージ・アレック・エフィンジャーの四人。ファン側には日本の巽孝之氏をまじえ司会は、今回トーストマスター パット・キャディガン。「ムーブメントとは何か」の質問に「Cワード」は○で

「ニューウェーブ」は×。六つ用意してある答えのなかに「ピストン運動」なんてのが含まれてたりする。

「いいぞ、下ネタパネル、もっとやれ！」

爆笑の応酬が続くなか、前方の客席ではガードナー・ドゾワの超巨体がウォーウォー叫びながら盛んに声援をおくる。

「SF入会で部屋を共にしたいと思う女性は誰か」

すかさず巽氏が、

「エレン・ダトロウ」（へー、そうだったの）

「他には？」

何人かの女性名のあと、「カレン・ジョイ・ファウラー」。大正解。壇上で小柄なカレンが両手を振り上げガッツポーズ。ファン側の勝利宣言の後、熱狂のうちにゲームは終わった。

GRAFFITI'S

By Takayuki Tatsumi

In his letter of October 13, 1987, Richard Kadrey (with whom I am sorry that Mari and I had so little opportunity to talk to at Armadillocon 9) asked me a good question: "I've never even seen a copy of *Hayakawa's Magazine*. But I understand that SF is alive and kicking there. Is there anything analogous to cyberpunk in Japan?" Although the point of his letter lies elsewhere, this naive but reasonable question gave me a chance to rethink the current situation of SF in our country. Forgive me, Richard, for replacing my unwritten reply to you with this column, which will appear regularly in SF EYE, focusing on the now more complex relationship between Japanese and American acceptances of our favorite genre.

Whether at home or abroad, I have already been asked, and have become to a certain extent tired of, the following pair of questions: "Why are there so few English translations of Japanese SF?" and "Why don't you hold a Worldcon in Japan?" We used to have a negative answer: "Bilingual condition gets you bored immediately." But now that Tokyo has grown too international not to be called at least "multinational," this type of answer became worn out. Yet the formidable problems of translation and Worldcon hosting still seem to us so closely tied together that our prepared answer became: "We can't do a Worldcon unless we have more Japanese SF translated." However, even this answer is at stake lately, because of greater efforts in Japanese-to-English translation that have been made by several talents. American residents in Japan, including David Lewis, Edward Lipsett, and Gene Van Troyer, respectively translated Yasutaka Tsutsui, Kazumasa Hirai, and Tetsu Yano.

RAINBOW

More recently, my Cornell friend Kazuko Behrens (now living in New York City) translated Yoshio Aramaki's "Soft Clocks," (written in 1968) which was edited and polished by Lewis Shiner, and finally sold to *Interzone*. What is more, professor Darko Suvin, one of the leading SF scholar-critics in the world, paid his third visit to Japan this last May, and revealed to me his deepest interest in exporting Japanese SF criticism to the English-speaking countries.

Now there seems little reason to retain our national policy of isolation. This fact inspired a panel on "Japanese SF and its Internationalization" at the thirtieth anniversary of *Uchujin* ("The Cosmic Dust"), the oldest and greatest fanzine—published by Takumi Shibano—held on November 21-22, 1987 in Kawasaki. The panelists included Ken Yamaoka (Chair), Yasuo Kawai, Shinji Maki, and myself. The topics ranged from the overly pessimistic anticipation of troubles in doing a Worldcon, to the ultra-optimistic perspective from which Japan should be considered as mere hosts, regardless of the amount of translation. Just as if Florida were to hold a Worldcon, we would go not because we know much of Floridian SF, but because the Worldcon happened to be there.

What has made us more concerned with this topic lately could be partly ascribed to the impact of the cyberpunks. The first half of the Eighties saw the rise of the third generation of our native writers, mainly consisting of people in their mid-twenties, and the major SF magazines began devoting more pages to their new works. In answer to Richard's question, it is this generation that has produced talents analogous to the cyberpunks, especially represented by Ms. Mariko O'Hara—who developed her own style chiefly modeled on Cordwainer Smith. I remember speaking to Bruce Sterling in 1986 about her

ディーラーズ・ルームのすみのほう、シマをあてがわれた日本人女性はブツの売却に、一生懸命。そこにのっぼのテキサス男なり物入りで、登場。男の名、“テキサスの生んだ86年ヒューゴー賞ベストファンアーティスト部門受賞者 ブラッド・フォスター”。同じテーブルにどっかと座ると、まじりけなしの好意の微笑というやつをうかべて、不案内このうえない大和撫子に手を差し延べてきたのだった。

「ヘイ、俺はブラッド・フォスター、イラストレーターとしてはちょっとしたもんなんだぜ。ほら、見せてやるよ、こいつがヒューゴー、何写真をとりたいて？ オーケーオーケー、ポーズはこれでいいかな」

そう、彼はおしゃべりな男だった。あてがわれたショバいっぱい自作のファンジン、カード、はてはぬりえの類いまでならべたて、お客相手に（いないときはとなりの私に）ペラペラペラペラ喋りまくる。

「ああ、これがSFアイ、知っているさ、良いファンジンだよな。おい、その、こいつは買わなきゃソンだぜ。なに、こっちが日本のファンジンね、へーえ、よし、一部俺のととっかえっこしようぜ。おい、にーちゃん、こちらは日本から、わざわざファンジン売りにきたんだってよ。感動もんだね、

見てってやれよ、ほらすごいだろ、なかなかやるじゃないか、ついでにおれのも買ってかない？」

かくして、途中でパネルが始まるってのはぬけ、ついビョーキがでてむかいの本屋へとしょっちゅうふらふら出歩いていたり（そのたんに店番してくれたのはもちろんフォスターだった）、いい加減な商売をやっているわりにはホントーにあっけなく、完売してしまった。

アルマジロコンのクライマックスは仮装ディスコパーティー。コスチュームのない人も、入り口で仮面をわたされなかにはいる。ダンスフロアはすでにひとでいっぱい。のっぼで黒髪のエキゾチック・ハンサムのケッセルは女性にモテモテ、次々相手を変えて踊ってる。ケッセルといつもくっついて（これもまたハンサムですごくおシャレなの）ケリーは、反対で、ビール片手にたそがれており、小柄で妖精のようなカレン・ジョイ・ファウラーは激しいリズムものともせず元気いっぱい踊りまくり、『オムニ』の名編集長エレン・ダトロウは取り巻き連中と喋くりあってる。大柄で髭男のウォルター・ジョン・ウィリアムズはダイナミックなロボット踊りを披露し、ルイス・シャイナーは奥方と隅っこのほうで甘いムードを楽しんでいた。

騒ぎ疲れて座っていると、地元のファンジン『テキサスSFインクワイアラー』の副編集長アンディ・マッキディが巽氏に「SFアイのインタビュー読んだよ、なかなかいいじゃない」とサインをもとめてきた。ロックグルー

ブ『クィーン』のフレディ・マーキュリィにそっくりな笑顔なんで、思わず見とれていると、巽氏も

「いや、君のブルース・インタビューもなかなか」

などと言って、お互いの成果をたたえあうのであった。フレディはつい最近『インクワイアラー』誌に「シャイナー&スターリング・インタビュー」を載せたばかりだったのである。国際親善にちょっと加勢して、

「あたしも読んだわ」

と一言。

「えっよんでくれたのかい、感激だなあ」

英語の苦手な私は、誤解のないようにもう一言。

「うん、辞書ひきひきね」

アンディが爆笑した。

「そりゃーそうだろうよ、俺だってブルースの言うことなんてむつかしくって辞書ひかなきゃわかんねー」

噂をすれば何とやら、そこにブルースもやってきて、またひとしきり、ダベリング。アンディが「よーブルース、新作ってのはどんなんだい？」と尋ねると、彼は「俺はレムをやったぜ」と豪語する。何のことかと思ったら、どうも架空の本の書評というのを書いてF & S Fに売ったらしい。その夜のブルースは最高に御機嫌らしく、アンディの「おめえ、あんなものよく売ったな」なる揶揄も気にせず、はしゃぎまわり、その後愛娘のエイミーにミルクをやる時間だと言って自室へ去っていったのだった。夜半過ぎ、アンディは飛行機の最終便でつく予定のオースン・スコット・カードを迎えにいき、そろそろお開きかと思って自室に引き上げようとしたとき、「これからホテルのプールで泳ごうぜ」と言って一派を率いたケッセルとトム・マドックスにでくわした。アルマジロコンはまだこれからという勢いなのである。

今回の大会は、ワシントンD. C. のSFアイ編集部キモ入りでおこなわれたホラー・ムービー・フェスティバルと重なって、ギブスン、シャーリィ、ディレイニーといった面々が欠場したため、サイバーパンク・パネルをはじめとする企画など、さしたるハブニングもなくやや散漫なかんじでおわったけど、会場の熱気がある種の雰囲気をつたえていて、何か初期の衝撃から過渡期に移行しつつあるような、一段落したようなそんな印象を持った。或いはトム・マドックスが言うようにサイバーパンクとはSFに取り憑いたウィルス・プログラムみたいなものなのかもしれない。いまは深く静かに潜行しながら、かぎりなく増殖しつつあるのかもしれない。こんな予感と余韻を残しつつ、アルマジロコンの夜は更けていった……

<再会>

unwittingly cyberpunkish short story, "Mental Female" (*Hayakawa's* December, 1986). In this story, Tokyo's mother computer and the North Siberian father computer appear on TV as a girl and a boy: Ms. Kipple and Mr. Techie. They fall in love with each other, and as foreplay begin playing catch—which launched missiles from both sides. The important thing about this story is that the author had written it without reading William Gibson, that is, before Hayakawa's translated *Neuromancer* was out.

What then, was, is and will be affected by Hayakawa's complete Gibson (primarily translated by Hisashi Kuroma and Hisashi Asakura) and the recently released *Schismatrix* by Bruce Sterling (released here in December, 1987, and translated by Yoshio Kobayashi)? During 1987, cyberpunk attracted attention in numerous magazines and journals outside the SF field, just as it did in the States, culminating in a feature section in one of the major lit-crit journals *Eureka* (Tokyo: Seido-sha Publishers). The November issue of that magazine featured—under the title: "P.K. Dick and After—Towards the Cyberpunk Culture"—works such as P.K. Dick's "Warning: We Are Your Police," John Shirley's "The Incorporated," and Lewis Shiner's "Dancers." This issue also translated the panel "Cyberpunk/Cyberjunk," the dialogue between William Gibson and Tom Maddox, and Bruce Sterling's essay "Midnight on the Rue Jules Verne" (all from SF EYE #1); also Fredric Jameson's "After Armageddon: Character Systems in *Dr. Blood-money*" as well as my interview with Samuel Delany (published in SF EYE #3). Essays of importance by Japanese critics include: Tadashi Nagase's "On *Schismatrix*: News from Neutopia," which compares the fate of the science fictional re-examined by Gibson and Sterling to the fate of the SF ghetto as such; Akira Koyama's "The Space Structure of Cyberpunk," which investigates Gibson's metaphors of random noise; and Yoichi Ohashi's "Double Plot: An Analysis of *Neuromancer*," which skillfully

explains Gibson's metonymical use of language.

One of the most intriguing things in 1987 was that a younger writer named Goro Masaki (who claims to have read James Tiptree, Jr.'s "The Girl Who Was Plugged In" more than thirty times, both in English and in translation) made his sensational debut in *Hayakawa's* (December, 1987) with the contest-winning story "Evil Eyes." This cyberpunkish story vividly describes the conflict between a mind software company and a new religious organization, culminating in the revelation that Mary, a full-armored woman working for the company, and Mugen, the charismatic figure of the organization, were produced by a multiple personality, the owner of which had been born a disfigured baby. Masaki himself, however, denies the Gibsonian influence, making the distinction between his emphasis on humanity and Gibson's lack of morality. But it is also true that Masaki's best readers must be deeply sympathetic to the cyberpunk modes.

1988 has already seen the "What is Cyberpunk?" feature of *Hayakawa's SFM* in its July issue, with translations of Marc Laidlaw's "Nutrimancer," Tom Maddox's "Spirit of the Night," John Shirley's "Wolves of the Plateau" (unpublished in the US), and John Kessel's article "The Humanist Manifesto" from *SF EYE* #1; while also printing essays by editors like Ellen Datlow and Steve Brown. In line with this issue, an annual convention series started in 1977. "SF Seminar," and Hayakawa, cooperated by holding a cyberpunk symposium on June 5, 1988. I was invited by Seibu Zaibatsu to give six bi-weekly lectures from April, 1988 through July on this subgenre at their Ikebukuro Community College.

Where is cyberpunk heading for? I am not sure. All I can say right now is that the very term was, from the beginning, doomed to rage out of control, just as the terms "hightech" or "punk" have always been out of control from the moment they were coined. ●

SF EYE T-SHIRT \$8.95

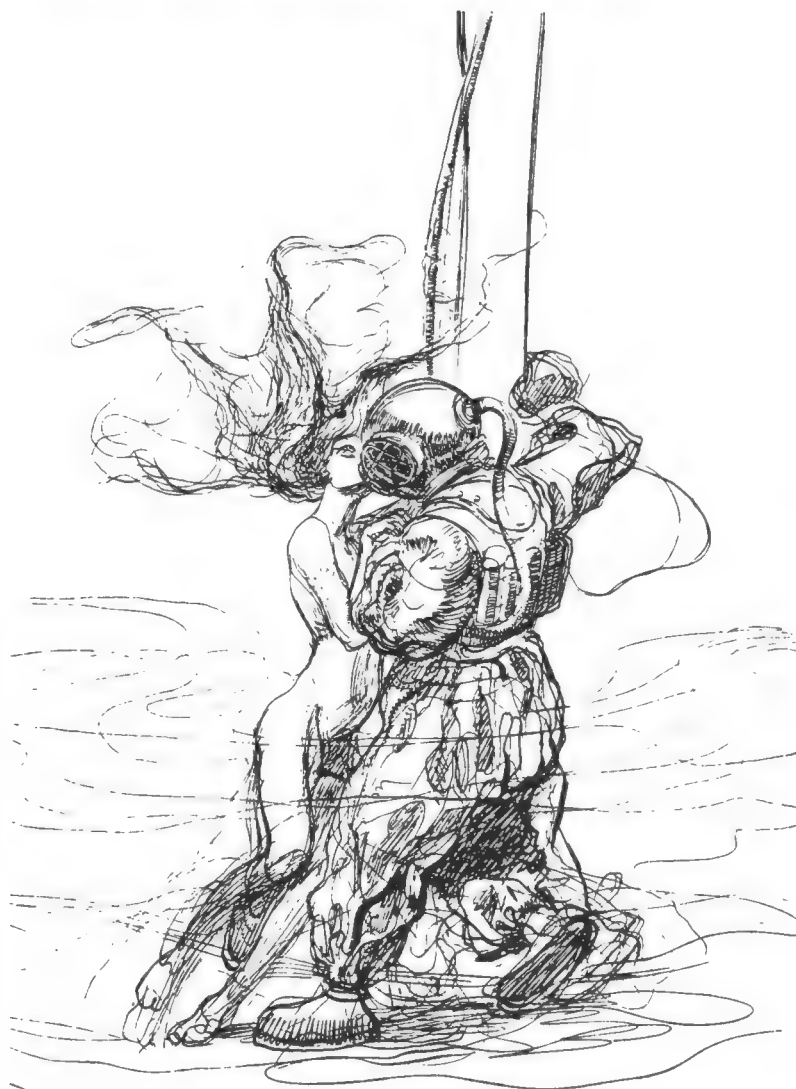
PLUS \$1.50 POSTAGE
& HANDLING

AVAILABLE IN ALL SIZES

ALLOW UP TO FOUR
WEEKS FOR DELIVERY



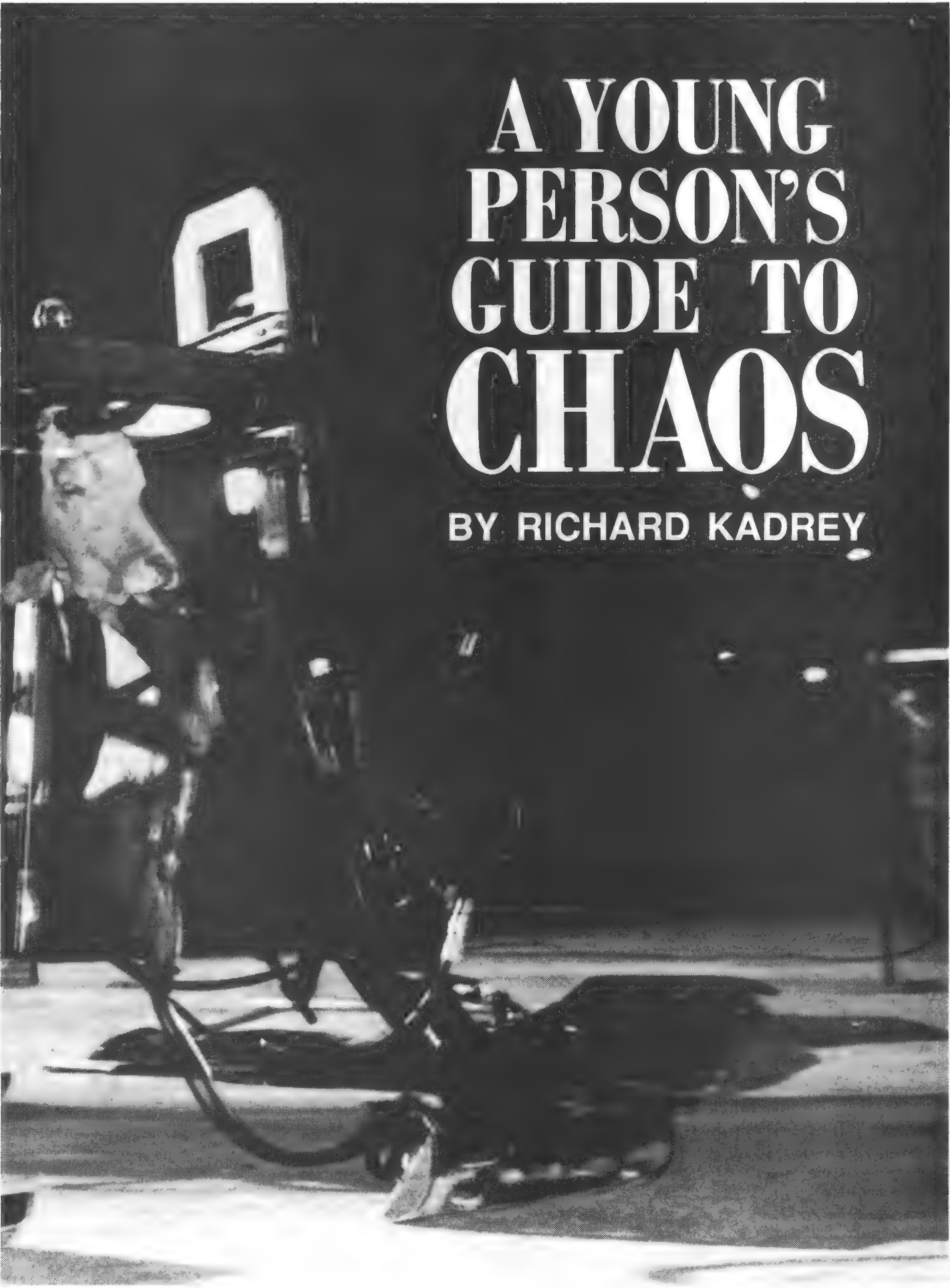
Apres Gargoyle . . .



**Gargoyle Magazine, PO Box 30906,
Bethesda, MD 20814**

(Fiction/Poetry/Interviews/Graphics/Reviews) \$10/yr.





A YOUNG PERSON'S GUIDE TO CHAOS

BY RICHARD KADREY

"The urge for
destruction
is also the
creative urge."

—Mikhail
Bakunin



PHOTO BY BOBBY NEEL ADAMS

It could be a scene from *Apocalypse Now* or, better yet, *Aliens*, with sets by Hieronymous Bosch. The performance area is stark, the underbelly of a freeway overpass in San Francisco: bare concrete, restraining barriers and hurricane fencing. A Navy surplus smoke machine is cranking out a choking white fog at one million cubic feet per minute. There are people scuttling by on the far side of the mist, but they are not the crowd's primary concern. All eyes are focused on the Inspector, a large, but surprisingly delicate machine that resembles a chrome-plated scorpion with a spinning rack of hacking blades where its stinger should be. The Inspector is eviscerating a seven-ton street sweeper, smashing doors and windows, and ripping the tread from unprotected tires. Moments earlier the Sprinkler From Hell had spewed burning high-pressure gasoline in a perfect parabolic arc in the direction of the standing-room-only crowd. The Walking Machine lumbers by looking like something the good

Doctor Frankenstein would come up with while trying to construct an elephant out of I-beams and a half-track engine. The performance has no name, which is unusual for Survival Research Labs, but then SRL specializes in the unexpected.

Defining the group is not easy. They are performance artists or, rather, the directors of a performance group. The actual performers vary from show to show. The performers are machines. Nightmare constructions; bits and pieces of scavenged industrial equipment, the flotsam of a post-industrial society. These found (and occasionally stolen) machines are stripped down, rebuilt, given new identities and personalities, then let loose on each other (and sometimes on the audience) in raw displays of savagery.

The founder of Survival Research Laboratories, Mark Pauline, spent a good part of his adolescence perfecting, among other things, new and improved gun designs. After leaving Florida for San Francisco, his first major art projects involved guerilla billboard

alterations. In one of his most famous, he changed a liquor ad slogan from "Feel the Velvet" to "Feel the Pain"—pasting a rictus scream of agony over the model's mouth.

In 1979 Pauline gave his first solo machine performance, **MACHINE SEX**. Staged in the parking lot of a Chevron station, it was based on *The Stranger* by Albert Camus and featured the beheading of dead pigeons dressed in Arab robes, all to the sound of a blaring musical soundtrack. In 1980 he was joined by two sympathetic artist/mechanics, Eric Werner and Matthew Heckert. Both men had extensive knowledge of various machine systems; Werner having spent years working on hot rod and motorcycle engines, and Heckert having worked for aerospace firms in Orange County. After moving into a six thousand square-foot warehouse in the Mission District of San Francisco, the three of them began producing the large-scale mechanical performances that have become the group's trademark.

Between 1980 and 1988, SRL has

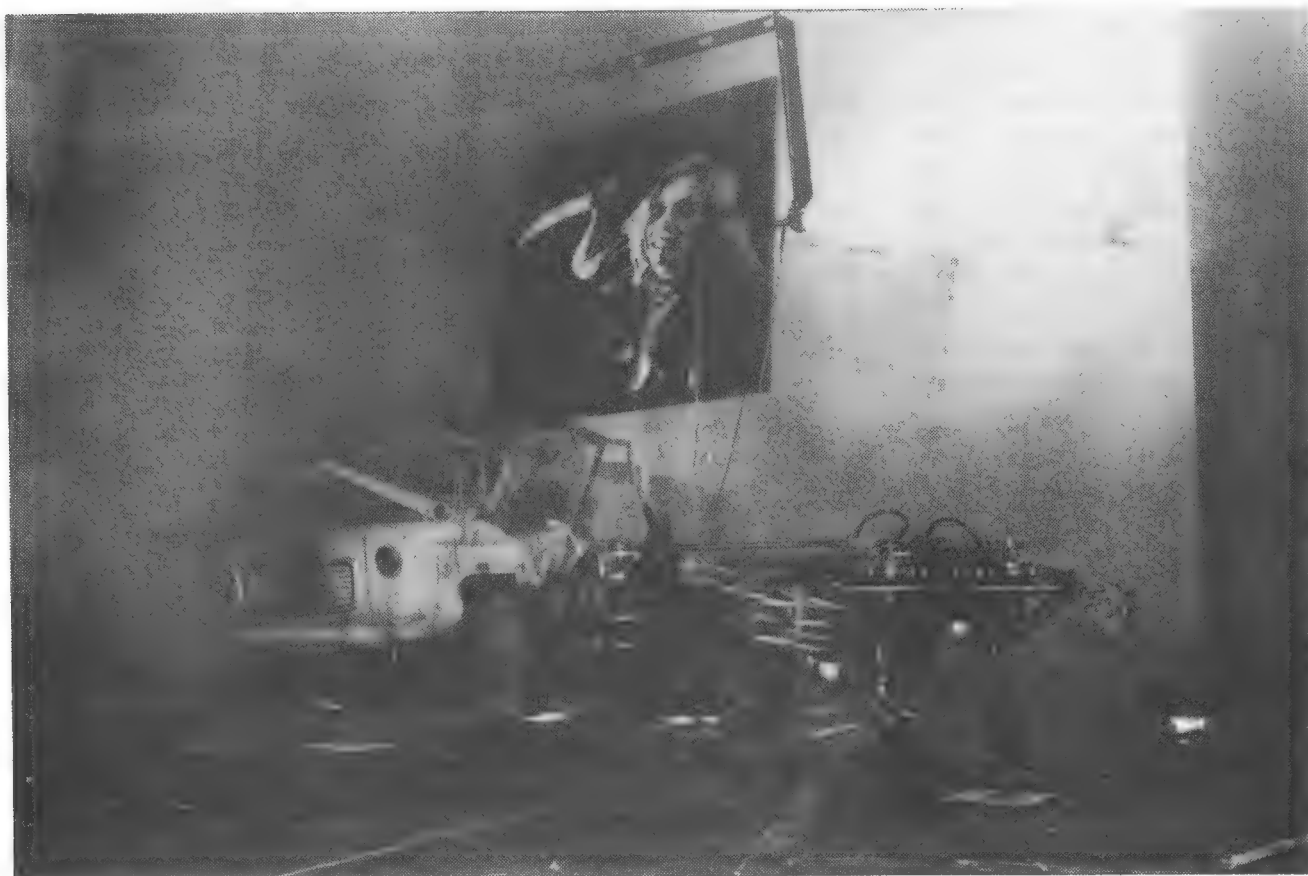


PHOTO BY BOBBY NEEL ADAMS

produced no less than twenty-four machine shows. From the beginning, each show explored a different aspect of contemporary society. In 1981, a performance titled **MYSTERIES OF THE REACTIONARY MIND** examined "the underlying mechanisms that characterize reactionary thought." In 1984, SRL presented **AN EPIDEMIC OF FEAR: THE RELIEF OF MASS HYSTERIA THROUGH EXPRESSIONS OF SENSELESS JUNGLE HATE**, a piece dealing with racial stereotypes and mob violence. In 1985, while driving home from a performance in New York, Pauline suggested that the group do a show based on the accounts he had read of torture in Central America. This resulted in one of their biggest and most complex performances: **EXTREMELY CRUEL PRACTICES: A SERIES OF EVENTS DESIGNED TO INSTRUCT THOSE INTERESTED IN POLICIES THAT CORRECT OR PUNISH.**

Word of SRL's performances had begun to spread outside of the San Francisco area by 1982. That was the year of one of their most controversial shows: **A CRUEL AND RELENT-**

LESS PLOT TO PERVERT THE FLESH OF BEASTS TO UNHOLY USES. This performance made extensive use of organic robots, devices the group had been experimenting with since 1981. Using road kills and freshly butchered animals purchased from meat markets, combined with a variety of servo-mechanisms, the group brought the animals back to a horror movie parody of life. These creatures/machines were and remain, arguable, the most disturbing images in SRL's arsenal of disturbing images. We are continually reminded of the tenuousness of flesh by such devices as the Rabot (a motorized rabbit carcass that walks backwards), the Mummy-Go-Round with its spinning animal mummies, and the Pig Pull, a device that slowly tore a pig carcass in half in **EXTREMELY CRUEL PRACTICES.**

But these performances are not just sensational or mindless Bread and Circuses destruction; that would go counter to the intelligence of the group. SRL's performances function as a sophisticated and sinister version

of a Fun House mirror. The image in the glass looks something like us, but is distorted, is not quite us.

This use of the familiar gives SRL in performance its power. All their machines, no matter how bizarre or deadly, are reminiscent of things we see everyday. In **AN EPIDEMIC OF FEAR**, one of the main aggressor machines was a parody of a construction crane, the type you see on building sites. Only SRL's crane swung a spiked wrecking ball and moved like a Sherman tank.

Cars appear in some form in almost every SRL performance. And what better image is there of the contemporary world, especially the contemporary United States? As writer J.G. Ballard (a major influence on Mark Pauline) said: "... If I had to pick a single image which best represented the middle and late twentieth century, it would be that of a man sitting in a car, driving down a superhighway."

But the members of SRL see the car in a much more sinister light.

Looking for the hidden symbolism in the car, they find not the freedom represented by the 1960's top-down-wind-in-the-hair-red-Mustang-convertible ideal, but a post-Vietnam vision of the machine as destroyer. "Every now and then you'll find a person that realizes that a car is a very murderous instrument, that it's just like a gun," says Pauline. "He drives up on the sidewalk and runs over a bunch of people, thinking, 'They never said that in Drivers' Ed, that I could run up on the sidewalk and kill fifty people just like a machine gun, but I bet I could.'"

Eric Werner's Ram Car and Square-Wheeled Car are perfect examples of the automobile as an instrument of brute force. Low and powerful, the Ram Car is a motorized battering ram sheathed in steel plates. From its left side extends a powerful mechanical claw, perfect for swiping at those slower victim machines. The Square-Wheeled Car is just what its name implies. It is huge and ridiculous,

and with its massive square wheels requires a tremendous amount of thrust to move. This is power at its most absurd. Aggression is presented as inevitably pointless by the incredible sight of the enormous V-8 engines, the black exhaust and the lunatic motion of the vehicle; motion that would turn any rider's bones to jelly.

The Square-Wheeled Car is also a good example of the prankster side of Survival Research Laboratories. Far from being depressing, SRL's performances are full of wild satire and absurd black humor. "We're all frustrated comedians," Pauline explains. "We just can't remember our lines, so we have to be inarticulate about it and do it with machines."

That's why Pauline's Sneaky Soldiers look the way they do. The Sneaky Soldiers are the Keystone Kops of SRL's dangerous world—simple human-like robots that crawl on their elbows through the destruction on the killing floor/performance space. You're not sure if they're looking for

a way out or just a good place to hide a satchel charge. Not that it really matters. By the end of each show they usually get stomped by one of the aggressor machines. The hydraulic legs of a flame-belching "spider" machine are directed by the movements of Pauline's guinea pig, Stu (for "Stupid"). Again, SRL works hard to create a complex and wildly destructive device, only to sabotage it by leaving its control in the hands (or feet) of a rodent with the I.Q. of dirt. Here we see that power is mindless, as well as absurd.

Whether we want to admit it or not, these machines are acting out very human impulses. All levels of oppression and repression are represented here. It's the boss cracking the whip. The speed freak in the liquor store with a gun. Seen from a distance, it's all-out war. Modern warfare can best be expressed as a kind of technophilic game of oneupmanship. The infantry is Out. Machines are In: Apache air gunships, TOW missiles,

SRL IN NYC by Lou Stathis

So, everything was looking peachy until Tuesday morning—the scheduled show day—when the gray NYC sky-cover busted its seams and dumped massive quantities of water all over the goddamn place. Since your typical SRL extravaganza features lots of electrical hook-ups, delicate chemical mixtures, and temperamental combustibles, the action was called off and rescheduled for Thursday, rain or whatever.

Well, it didn't stop precipitating all through Wednesday—got worse in fact—and by Thursday the Big Guy on the Sky-Faucet couldn't seem to make up his mind one way or the other, so he just let it drizzle all afternoon and waited 'til dusk to open the spigot up full and drop the mercury into the low fifties. Thus, conditions ended up being even worse on the postponed-to "rain-date"—but it was either get on with it then, or face refunding several thousand ten-buck tickets from a long-since over-spent budget. So, like it or not, it was showtime on Thursday night at nine, May 19, at the Shea Stadium parking lot, and fuck the weather.

Now, there was no way that I was gonna miss this thing. Several wimps I know pussied out when they looked outside that day, but I'd been waiting to eyeball an in-the-metal SRL show for a good six years, since I'd first heard of this deranged motorhead artboy trio (now duo) from San Francisco. So far, they'd only had the chance to do a Reader's Digest condensed version of their show here in the Big One, fenced into a wrestling-ring-sized corner of the very crowded snot-club Area (after which some dame tried to sue them for splashing motor oil on her brand-new *haute* frock). That was back in May of '85, and needless to say, it only teased the jones (though the enthusiastic wall and fence-ramming they did with a feisty little remote-controlled go-kart was quite a kick). They'd been trying ever since to drum up the budget (twenty or thirty thou at least) and clear the right location for a New York

show, but kept getting frustrated by one thing or another (fire and safety laws here are quite restrictive). Finally, last fall, a coalition of art-event organizations was able to scrape the dough together and line up a suitable venue—only to have it fall through at the last moment. Six months later the Shea lot turned up, but *only* if the show could happen on a specific date—in six weeks time. Impossible, but they'd have to do it.

So there we were, a bunch of hardy boys (and girl or two—but hey, SRL destructo-fests are quintessential boy events), huddled shivering under umbrellas on a pair of perpendicularly arrayed bleachers. The art-dinks who'd arranged the thing were obviously out of their league—they'd set up only *one* entry gate for the three-to-five thousand culture-voyeurs lining up for their dose of artestablishment-sanctioned mayhem, so it took 'til well past the announced starting time before every cranky one of them got in. By then, the bleachers were jammed with twitchy geeks who wanted their entertainment to start *right* away, and were not about to be pacified by the sleazy roller-rink muzak tinkling from the PA (culled from Survivalist Matt Heckert's massive collection of same). So, as the clock ticked the mood got uglier, and the crowd got vocally restive. Us grumpy NYers are not used to suffering for our art.

Finally, after continuous scampering preparation by Pauline, Heckert, and their crew of two dozen Lab-techs, the proceedings got underway shortly before ten. Dubbed **THE MISFORTUNES OF DESIRE** it started with a huge column of thick, foul-smelling smoke that, considerably, zoomed straight for my face. That was when it hit me, choking and grimacing along with everyone else in the bleachers around me, that the discomfort and inconvenience of the horrible weather was just another part of the unpleasant SRL experience—if those nasty boys could've planned it that way I'm sure they would've, because putting the audience through shit



PHOTO BY BOBBY NEEL ADAMS

is one of their prime directives (a point further emphasized toward the end of the show, when the bleachers that I had by-then vacated started vibrating like the back end of a Harley). This was not allowed to be a passive viewing experience—you have to feel danger, threatened in some way (or at the very least, pissed off), otherwise these smartassed Researchers ain't satisfied.

The smoke tapered off after a bit (my hair and clothes stank for days), and the action became visible. An ackacky gun shot six-foot long fluorescent light tubes hundreds of feet into the distance, sometimes smashing through a three-story tower of glass windows (not a Silverberg reference, boys and girls). The Shock Wave Cannon sent eardrum-popping bangs in every direction. A gargantuan cement-mixer-looking thing electrically ignited ejaculations of diesel fuel, sending huge face-warming flames a hundred feet into the air. A nasty spidery contraption crawled around, stopping frequently to menace the press booth. A three-story Wheel of Misfortune (made from welded-together metal barrels) rolled into the fray, banging into a street-light and nearly knocking it out of the ground. The Inchworm, a tank-like, mono-clawed metallo-beast that drags itself along the ground, grabbed the stuck Wheel, crunching it in its claw, and almost upended it into the crowd. The big stuffed body suspended at the Wheel's center twitched and jerked, finally exploding and releasing xeroxes of high-denomination US currency into the wind (many of which, I'm told, turned up the following day in Lower East Side cash registers).

It went on like that for about an hour, smashing and chasing, rolling and burning, crawling and flying, smelling and crushing, until just about everything was destroyed. Even though the sky had zipped itself about midway through the show the crowd had been steadily thinning out, many of them expressing disappointment, the limpicks. There are few people more narrow-minded,

intolerantly uncharitable, and snottily hard-to-please than a tightassed audience of NYC art-swine. I couldn't quite extract from these twits what it was exactly they were expecting, but they nonetheless registered whining disappointment. My suspicion is, like most spoiled entertainment consumers today they demand to be constantly stimulated out of their already over-satiated lethargies, which requires entertainment producers to concoct ever more spectacular and expensive displays. This crowd wanted a million-dollar fireworks show, full of dazzling pyrotechnics and multiple-orgasm climaxes, and all they got was a bunch of scruffy junkyard scavengers staging an improvised event.

That Pauline, Heckert & Co. were not given credit for the sheer protean ingenuity and intuitive genius of their accomplishment pisses me off no end. I mean, lots of guys can fix machines, and even build them given the correct plans and a sufficient backup structure (enough money, proper equipment, etc.), but how many are there that can just make the fucking things up as they go along, and have them perform some pretty amazing bigger-than-life routines? These guys are the original garage futurists, the avatars of those pulp-born basement tinkerers that used to crowd the science-fiction landscape, and I think their cumulative discipline, conceptual audacity, and skillful industriousness rate them just a bit of slack, like a life achievement award or something. It was a great show, guys, even if I do still stink like diesel fuel, you bastards. ●

Lou Stathis is a noted weapons expert, Phil Dick scholar, High Times editor, Richard Stark enthusiast, and aficionado of (not to mention well-known critic of) music designed to corrode stainless steel. Lou lives in NYC, where he can be found perched on high places glaring down at passersby.



B-1 bombers; in the future it will be X-ray lasers, kinetic Kill vehicles and armored battle "drones." And it's no different on the other side of the Cold War. Every May Day, the Russians parade their tanks and missiles for the world like so many pedigreed poodles. SRL isn't about to be left behind in this rush for the future. Like the Pentagon, they have their own R&D projects. Currently they're working with hardware and software specialists from Stanford University, designing computer interfaces for some of their machines. Pauline has already designed and deployed his own small-scale rail gun which shoots balls of water in a plasma state at forty MPH for a hundred yards. Considering everything, it's not hard to imagine SRL as a direct parody of the government's own SDI program.

Night sky; a slow, damp wind from the west; billboards are all ruins in this part of town. Illuminated by dozens of carbon arcs, the machine-packed parking lot

looks bright and antiseptic, like some abandoned foundry-turned-surgery. For SRL, it's showtime. At a signal, sheets of glass are launched end over end from a steel catapult, disintegrating on the asphalt like car windshields in a thousand crash test films. The roar of the crowd and the rhythm of the pre-recorded soundtrack hits almost at once, a wall of sound you feel in your belly rather than hear. Homemade rockets are burning across the killing floor and the Inspector is wheeling over the glittering carpet of glass, looking for the night's victim. A typical SRL performance is designed to overload your senses. Here is one last form of control: the artist manipulating the audience.

Survival Research Laboratories' images of destruction are often funny, often horrible. We look into the distorted mirror and we see ourselves, or something like us. When SRL takes the most familiar tools of our technological culture and turns them against us, they destroy forever our Mister Wizard visions of the machine

as a passive servant. As Pauline says: "People are gonna have to come to the realization that the perfect marriage of humans and technology is instantaneous death." ●

*(After working in the data-dense environment of **The Whole Earth Review**—not to mention writing a new novel—Richard states that he is suffering from Net Burn, and is trying to get away from all forms of input for awhile.)*

Videos of SRL performances are available from two outlets:

Re/Search
1529 Grant Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94133
415-362-1465

Target Video
678 South Van Ness
San Francisco, CA 94110
415-863-0118
Their catalog is free.

A Conversation With **ELLEN DATLOW & EDWARD BRYANT**

Editors are a much-maligned though vitally necessary species in the literary ecology, not unlike spiders. They encourage the timid to strive farther, and rein in the excesses of the not-so-timid. Most importantly, they separate the minute grains of wheat from the vast mountain of chaff that is written every year. Without a good editor doing that sifting, finding a decent story to read would be like hunting for a diamond in pit filled with broken glass. Of course, one person's diamond is always another's glass shard. Editors, therefore, are often unloved and the subject of a great deal of complaint.

For the last several years, Ellen Datlow has been the fiction editor of *Omni Magazine*—the highest paying SF short story market there is (aside, perhaps, from *Playboy's* infrequent dabblings in the genre). She has been responsible for the publication of a stunning array of the best of modern science fiction, from William Gibson's best short stories to those of the unique Howard Waldrop. Datlow has also edited a number of anthologies, including *The Omni Books of Science Fiction* #1-5 from Zebra Books (#6 & 7 to be published in January 1989, and the first five to be reprinted—an essential series that charts modern SF). She has just co-edited *The Year's Best Fantasy* with Terri Windling (July, 1988, St. Martin's), and this looks like it may be an annual event. *Blood Is Not Enough* will appear from William Morrow in late 1988 or early 1989 (paperback to follow from Berkley). This will be an anthology on the subject of vampirism—which does not necessarily mean the toothy caped blood-suckers popularized by Bram Stoker et al., but the full range of psychosocial intimidation implied by the word.

Ed Bryant is a superb short story writer and critic with a long and distinguished career in the SF field. His credits are legion, including several significant sales to Ellen Datlow. Ed is one of those writers who works almost exclusively in short fiction—unfortunately, the novelists tend to get most of the kudos in this field. If you don't know who he is by now, you haven't been paying attention.

—spb



ILLUSTRATION BY RICHARD THOMPSON



PHOTO BY GEORGE R.R. MARTIN

**Intellectually,
I think that
editors should
be completely
invisible.
Personally,
I don't want to
be invisible.**

ED BRYANT: *I have seen a number of editors who, in a way that might be construed as self-aggrandizing, make sure that they have a by-line as editor on the jacket of a novel. We are all aware that so-and-so is the fiction editor for a magazine, it is part of the colophon. But on beyond the documentation of it, how intrusive should the editor as a persona be in this*

whole process of publishing fiction? How invisible should the editor be?

ELLEN DATLOW: I think the question for magazine editors and book publishers is different. An editor who is editing a magazine is forming the magazine—not, however, at *Omni* because the magazine is more than just its fiction. But an editor of a science fiction magazine has so much influence over that magazine that the magazine is them, is their taste.

But book editors shouldn't be intrusive at all, except in the creation of the book. Preferably, the end product will be a wonderful book and that may be a combination of the editing and the writing. Hopefully mostly the writing, but the editor might have had a lot of influence in forming the end product as far as a novel goes.

Acknowledgements are wonderful, the few times I've been acknowledged in people's books, it's a great kick and it is very hard for an editor to say: oh no I don't want any attention. I have no interest in writing and for me the editing process is a creative process when I

work with the author. Just trying to get the author to produce his/her best work is as creative as I get. Personally, I would like to get the attention and acknowledgement that I chose or edited or worked with a great writer and *Omni* produced a great story. On another level I don't feel it's right. Intellectually, I think that editors should be completely invisible. Personally, I don't want to be invisible.

BRYANT: *You certainly wouldn't turn down the Hugo for best editor.*

DATLOW: Hell no. As a matter of fact it bothers me that I've never been nominated for the Hugo. I perfectly understand why. *Omni* is not considered a science fiction magazine, my name isn't plastered all over *Omni*, it's on one of the mastheads, and that's it. I understand, but it still bothers me. Because, otherwise how does an editor get recognition? A writer gets instant recognition because his name is on the book. They produce this object; the story or the novel. An editor is always going to be on the sidelines. The closest I can get to so-called center stage is editing anthologies. I don't want to become a celebrity, but I'd like to be known as a terrific editor and a terrific anthologist. That's as close to center stage as I'd ever get, since I have no intention of becoming a writer.

BRYANT: *But you would prefer more public acknowledgement than the knowledge that right now, at least in your career, Omni stories frequently turn up on awards final ballots and frequently win?*

DATLOW: Going to conventions is a real kick because that's where you do get the acknowledgment. Even though I may not be nominated for a Hugo, people do come up to me and say, "Oh, you published a great story or you did this, you did that, you wrote a great rejection letter." That's nice, I like that. It's an ego boost and I don't think anyone can deny that they want some kind of acknowledgment for what they've done.

BRYANT: *On a slightly different track here: as an editor for a major magazine—where admittedly you don't publish a lot of fiction, but what you do publish reaches an*

enormous audience—to what degree do you feel that you are either reflecting the tastes of the perceived readership, or is there ever an attempt to alter the tastes of that readership? I guess what I'm getting at is the criteria for story choice.

DATLOW: I don't feel I'm reflecting my readers' taste, I don't know what my readers' taste is. I'm reflecting my taste in my choices. As far as trying to change my readers' taste, I'm trying, in a way, to broaden their minds. If I love an offbeat, and believe I can get away with it, I'll publish the story. I think I can get away with either more or less—depending on the type of story it is—than I could publishing a science fiction magazine. There are stories that I didn't feel I could publish because I found that they would be offensive in a certain way that I didn't think would be acceptable to my audience. Not offensive to me necessarily. Since I don't know who the audience is, it is only this perception I have of what the *Omni* audience is: which is a pretty general reader more than a science fiction reader. When there are borderline stories that are too weird, too violent, too this or that, I'll take how my readership will react into consideration. Depending on how strongly I feel about the story, I'll either say I care how my readership reacts, and not run it, or that I don't give a damn and I'll stuff it down their throats anyway—which I have done occasionally.

I don't know if I should bring this up, but there are stories I have loved personally, that I really wanted to publish someplace, which is partly why I got into the anthology market. There was a story of yours, "The Transfer," that I absolutely adored, but I didn't feel it was right for *Omni*. I just felt it was absolutely the wrong audience. Because the story was so violent and so specifically violent against women. It was a tough call. I'm glad "The Transfer" ended up in *The Cutting Edge*.

I've turned down other wonderful stories for similar reasons. I turned down "All My Darling Daughters" by Connie Willis, which I think is wonderful, but I felt it came across as anti-male. I didn't

feel comfortable publishing it in a national publication that can only publish two or three stories an issue. In a science fiction magazine or in any other kind of magazine that could publish five or six other stories, I wouldn't have had any problem. I'm using it for my alien sex anthology. I basically got into the anthology business because I've loved a lot of stories that I've turned down at *Omni*. I couldn't publish them in the magazine, but I could reprint them in something else if I could think of a theme.

I turned down an excellent story by Bruce Sterling. It was about an Arab fanatic, a terrorist, and it is going to appear in *Bad Brains*, the SemioText anthology of off-the-wall fiction. This was my own personal judgment call. I turned it down because I felt that it would reinforce my audience's prejudices against Arabs. *Omni* aims at a general audience. It does not aim at the science fiction audience. Someone could have read this story out of science fictional context. I just didn't think it should have a national circulation. I don't think this is censorship, because I think the story should be published. I am glad it is being published where it is being published.

BRYANT: *But you won't be the one to publish it.*

DATLOW: No, I won't be the one to publish it. It's being published someplace where the readership understands that these stories are science fiction and way out. Where a story appears can be very important.

BRYANT: *Let's take another angle to this whole business. Getting more at the nuts and bolts, I'd like you to talk about preparation for being an editor. As far as I know, the Eastern liberal arts colleges don't have majors in becoming an editor for a magazine or a book publishing company. I'm curious about how people become editors. Particularly, I want you to touch on whether men and women start out equally in this business. Why is it, if my observation is valid, are there so many women editing science fiction and fantasy?*

DATLOW: First of all, there are courses in publishing; the Radcliffe

publishing course, and Columbia University has a publishing course.

When I was going to college I was an English major. I kind of fell into it because I didn't know what else to do with my life. I knew I was a reader, I'm a voracious reader. I took English Lit as a major, knowing only that I didn't want to teach.

I went off for a year in Europe after I graduated college and when I got back, I sat down and said to myself, okay, what do I do with an English Lit major? Well, I thought, perhaps publishing. I didn't know anything about publishing. I looked in the Yellow Pages and sent my resume' to every publisher I had ever heard of, magazines or books. I actually got a call back from Little Brown. They were looking for a sales assistant and hired me.

As far as women versus men getting into publishing, I was in publishing for several years before I got into science fiction. It's changed now, I think, but usually women start from the very bottom as an editorial assistant. It's very hard to work your way up in hardcover publishing. I've always heard that paperback is easier. But, I was in hardcover, mainstream publishing, and it was tough. There is a very strong old boy network there. Very often guys would come in through sales, so they were upper level to begin with.

Women and men are coming into publishing more equally now, I think, than they did ten or fifteen years ago. When I was an editorial assistant at Holt, Rinehart and Winston for three years, I don't think there were any male editorial assistants. There were all these young women coming to New York and wanting to work in publishing and they all got editorial assistant jobs. There was a high attrition rate. Many got out because they couldn't live on the pay, which was minuscule. It's still pretty awful.

Switching to *Omni* and how it works there; there are men and women as editorial assistants. I think it's much more equal at *Omni*. We have a very mixed staff, male and female, gay and straight. Anyone can work their way up from an editorial assistant if whoever is in charge thinks they're good. *Omni* is the first magazine



PHOTO BY GEORGE R.R. MARTIN

**I think
fantasy's
time had
come. Women
editors have
not created
the market,
they are
fulfilling the
market for
fantasy.**

I've worked at, so I don't know how other magazines do it. But in book publishing, I found I was going up against a wall. I couldn't get anywhere in hardcover publishing, which is why I finally left it. During a period of unemployment I was offered a job at *Omni*, as a freelance, temp reader. It was the

first magazine job I had ever had. Then I was made associate fiction editor, when Bob Sheckley became fiction editor.

I have no idea why there are so many women in science fiction. I came in at a time where all these women were becoming powerful and moving up. I think most of the female editors in science fiction are not from fandom. Previously, most of the editors of science fiction, certainly the male editors, came from fandom or were writers or both. Ben Bova, Lester Del Rey, Fred Pohl, were science fiction writers first and became editors or, like David Hartwell and John Douglas—came from fandom. But most of the women didn't. I didn't, Susan Allison didn't, Shawna McCarthy didn't; Ginjer [Buchanan] might be one of the few female editors who has come from fandom, and that was great for her.

BRYANT: *Of course now there is Debbie Notkin who has just gone to work for Tor.*

DATLOW: I don't know why suddenly women are in power. That is mystery to me as well as anybody else.

BRYANT: *If one grants that this observation is accurate, that there are that many women who are editing science fiction and fantasy—this is admittedly highly speculative, but do you see any effect that this may be having on what science fiction and fantasy is being published?*

DATLOW: Yes.

BRYANT: *How is it skewed?*

DATLOW: I know Greg Benford several years ago wrote something in Charles Platt's rag, *The Patchin Review*, [subsequently known as *REM*, now called *Science Fiction Guide—spb*] about how women are ruining science fiction, and making it all fantasy.

BRYANT: *In the sense that in this culture women stereotypically have no technological background. Therefore they ignore it and invalidate hard-science science fiction.*

DATLOW: Most of the women editors I know are interested in all kinds of fiction. Beth Meacham, certainly, publishes hard science fiction.

BRYANT: *Betsy Mitchell.*

DATLOW: Yeah. I think the perception was that women editors brought in fantasy. I don't think that's true. I think fantasy's time had come. Women editors have not created the market, they are fulfilling the market for fantasy.

As for myself, all I can talk about is my taste as an editor. My taste might be very different from other women editors.

BRYANT: *Probably different from the male editors' taste, too.*

DATLOW: Sure, but I think there is a perception, and I think it's true, that I like hard-hitting science fiction. I don't necessarily mean hard science fiction. But there is a certain type of writing, it doesn't have anything to do with science fiction, that I like that is hard-boiled. I love mainstream writers like Elmore Leonard and Ed McBain. I go for psychological thrillers, and that's reflected in my taste in science fiction. I like odd-ball books by people like Jonathan Carroll, Iain Banks, Ian McKewan. They're in the mainstream more or less, and

that's reflected in my taste in the fantasy that I publish in *Omni*. Most of what I publish at *Omni* is complementary to what I read in mainstream.

BRYANT: *More so than a science fictional trend.*

DATLOW: Definitely. I've never been a science fiction fan. I don't have much knowledge of the history of science fiction. I never read the science fiction magazines. I will admit this in an interview: I never knew that they existed. I never knew fandom existed until I got to *Omni*.

I read science fiction as a child, as a teenager, but I read everything else, too. It was just part of the enormous amount of reading I did. I read everything. Well, not everything, I hardly ever read non-fiction. But I'll read all kinds of different fiction and that is what I bring to being an editor. I don't care about the history of science fiction. I publish what I like to read and I don't give a flying fuck what anyone else thinks, frankly. As long as I don't get in trouble at *Omni* from the people who control me.

BRYANT: *This catalogue of your tastes would seem to tie into that well-known tag of "The queen of cyberpunk." I'm curious as to whether you perceive yourself as being a sort of maven of cyberpunk short fiction?*

DATLOW: Well, that's unfortunate. It's silly, it was meant to be silly, the whole label. My interest in so-called cyberpunk comes from, obviously, the hard-boiled detective novel. But it gets tired. The originals are wonderful: Hammett, Chandler, Thompson, Horace McCoy. The original hard-boiled detectives and hard-boiled characters are wonderful. The people who copied them produced bullshit. They had all the trappings and none of the heart, none of the guts. The same thing is true with cyberpunk.

William Gibson is completely unique. I really don't believe anyone else is a cyberpunk. That's just my opinion. People criticize Bill's stuff for being all glitz. That's bullshit. It's got a moral view, there's a sense of ethics. There is also romanticism, which is what links him to the hard-boiled novels of the

thirties and forties. His stuff has guts. I think his fiction has a lot of resonance in it.

Other so-called cyberpunk writers have this too. Well, the original ones. I hate even to talk about cyberpunk, I hate that word because I really do think Bill is the only one. But for the people who are doing it and using it, it's just a writing style. Bruce Sterling doesn't like to hear this. But it can be easily duplicated as a writing style and that's not cyberpunk. I get a lot of stories now that have the trappings of cyberpunk, but there is nothing to them. They have no heart. They're hollow. The best stories, the best fiction in general, has got to have more than just glitz. Good writers, the people who believe in it, who aren't just trying to get on the bandwagon and market their novels or their stories, they've got more than just glitz. There is something there, there has got to be a solid . . .

BRYANT: *A solid fictional core.*

DATLOW: Not just a fictional core, there has got to be a moral core of some sort.

BRYANT: *An ethical stance, something like that.*

DATLOW: Oh, God, maybe. I have been having arguments all weekend with people about whether Gibson is political or not. Of course he's political.

BRYANT: *But he's not polemical.*

DATLOW: No. All I was trying to point out to people was that Gibson, everyone, has a political bias whether it's intentional or not. Your work can not help but have a political bias. But that doesn't mean you have to hit people over the head with it. You don't even have to be conscious of it. But it's there. Gibson does not overtly push for any political system. But his characters and everything in his novels and stories is extremely individualistic, for the individual. I don't know if that's pro-capitalism, but it certainly is pushing capitalism to the limits. He's not judging capitalism, but he does have his characters work in a capitalistic society and use it.

BRYANT: *And other people will say he doesn't know what he is*

talking about because we have analyzed his work . . .

DATLOW: And it's very political, and it says this, that and the other thing.

BRYANT: *And it's didactic or non-didactic as the case may be.*

DATLOW: No, it's all subliminal and that's how the best literature, the best art is. It's all subliminal. The best art is not going to hit you over the head with a moral. It has to be entertaining.

I was thinking last night about propaganda in the forties before America got into World War II. There were all these propaganda movies coming out, trying to get the American public gung-ho for joining the war against Germany and the Japanese. But they were probably entertaining. I haven't seen them in years so I don't remember them, but the first thing was to entertain. They had to entertain. Maybe they did get everyone to think "let's go get the Hun, get the Nazis." But they were entertaining first and I think that's crucial.

I talked to someone today about reading Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged* when I was a teenager. It was a great read, it's a wonderful book. But I hated her philosophy. Her philosophy is really sickening. It's the extreme: pull yourself up by your own bootstraps and no one help anyone else, and that's it. Even when I was reading it, I was not happy about it. But it really didn't register until after I finished the book how much I hated what she was saying. But I still loved the book as I was reading it.

BRYANT: *It's the sugar coating on the horse pill.*

DATLOW: And either you can accept it or not. If you're conscious of what's going on in the novel and not just reading for entertainment—or even if you are just reading for entertainment—if it's by a strong writer, you are going to get what their aim is whether you like it or not. You're going to get their polemics, even their hidden polemics. And you can either accept them or reject them. That's what free speech is about, and free will.

BRYANT: *Here's a grittier question. Someone asked me this in*



PHOTO BY GEORGE R.R. MARTIN

Every once in a while I realize that people have no idea what I do for a living, what editing means.

another context. I said I'm not an editor, so I don't know, but I can find out. What it comes down to is—this is going from the theoretical to the highly actual—what do editors exactly do? At their best and, if you want to address it, at their worst as well. What do editors give a writer in his or her work? This is sort of a snarled ball of string question about what happens when you get to the office each day.

DATLOW: Actually, I'm happy to answer that because every once in a while I realize that people have no idea what I do for a living, what editing means. My parents don't know.

BRYANT: *Just editorial lunches and posh receptions.*

DATLOW: And parties, that's what they think at the office. They don't know what I do either. Because non-fiction editing is different from fiction editing.

Very superficially, what I do is I read manuscripts, accept them or reject them and publish them. But breaking that down, I read manuscripts every day. I'll read pro manuscripts or semi-pro manuscripts and I have an assistant reading the slush pile; filtering through it and giving me things that she likes or thinks that I should look at. She knows I want to see anything that's literate whether it's appropriate for *Omni* or not, so she will give me things that may not even be science fiction or fantasy, but are close. On the first read I'll read for enjoy-

ment. Let's say it's a good enough story and I like it. If I'm lucky, very lucky, it's perfect.

BRYANT: *How often does that happen?*

DATLOW: It depends. Half and half I'd say.

BRYANT: *Of publishable stories.*

DATLOW: By perfect I don't mean it doesn't need copy-editing, that it doesn't have spelling errors, doesn't have a few awkward sentences. What I mean is that it doesn't need a rewrite and it needs very, very, little work. Probably at least half are like that. If I like the story enough to think I'm going to buy it, or if I'm interested enough to see a rewrite on it—that it could be a wonderful story but it has some flaws that can be fixed—I'll write the author a letter. I'll probably make a copy of the manuscript and write all over it. That depends on how much work it needs.

I can give an example of how the editorial process worked with Gibson's first story that I saw, "Johnny Mnemonic." I got the story. I could see that the language in it was really brilliant, but it was so compressed that I couldn't understand what it was about. It was very compressed. He used a lot of words I was unfamiliar with and didn't explain them. I wanted the story to work but I felt it needed decompression. I made a copy of the manuscript and wrote all over it, making notes, asking questions. The things I don't want to just scribble all over the manuscript I'll type in a letter and ask "what about this, why that." I'll go over it page by page, line by line, if it's worth it, and Gibson's story was. Then I'll send it to the author and say "what do you think about this, I'm very interested in the story, give me a call or I'll call you and we can talk about it. If you'd like to do a rewrite, I'd love to see it again but call me first or drop me a line or something."

Then, I'll talk to the author and discuss the changes I have in mind. I'll find out what the author agrees with and what the author doesn't. I'll go over each point in the manuscript and I'll argue: "If this is what you intend, then it didn't come across."

My job as an editor is, I feel, to get the finished product to reflect what the author wants it to reflect. If it doesn't, then there is a problem, because writing is communication. I consider myself a pretty typical reader in some ways and I want to understand what's going on. I'll let the author go, occasionally, if a riff is just so brilliant that I can't bear it. I'll let the author get away with a little here and there if I don't get it. But generally, I want to be able to understand what's going on because I think my readership would want to know what's going on. Sometimes it's very clear in the authors' minds what they mean, but they didn't express it well enough. And other times—and this is harder to deal with because sometimes a writer can't fix it—they don't know what they intended so they have no answers. They can't fix it because they didn't think it out completely. They didn't know how they wanted to end the story, they didn't know where they were going with it. I try to encourage writers to rewrite even if I know I'm not going to buy a story. I will tell them that: "I don't think I'm going to buy this story no matter what, but I really think it wouldn't hurt you to rewrite it, I think it would help you, it would be a better story, but it's entirely up to you."

So, I work with the author making suggestions and comments. I don't think I usually make demands. I've been told that because I have so much power, that what I ask for is a demand and I just don't believe that. I don't think I have ever bullied anyone to make changes that he/she didn't want. I hope not. I wouldn't want that to happen. Because it's not my story, it's theirs, even though I may think I'm right and they're wrong. I may not take the story, and I guess that is a way of bullying. But, that's the author's problem, not mine. I'm sorry that I have a lot of money to hand out and that I have strong tastes or strong opinions about what I want and don't want. That's just the way it goes.

Substantive editing is when you suggest structural changes: "this character shouldn't be there, this is terrible dialogue, take that out, cut this, do that." That's the major stuff.

PHOTO BY GEORGE R.R. MARTIN



That I do before I commit to buy a story. I will *not* buy a story, if the story needs that much work, until it's done. But then, once I do buy a story, right before it goes into production, I'll line edit it. Line editing is much closer work. If a sentence just doesn't seem to work, if it has an awkward phrasing, I might pick it up earlier, when I'm doing the substantive editing, when I'm looking more at the whole of the story. When I line edit it's usually several months at least after I've bought the story. So what I do is read the story again. I used to try to line edit as I read the story. But I found that if I hadn't read the story in a long time, I would become involved all over again and couldn't edit it on the first read.

So now I read through for the entertainment again, and then go back over the story and line edit it and whatever else needs to be done. That's where I find typos and misspellings and awkward sentences and things like that. Then it goes into copy editing which is whole different thing. That's more punctuation and house style.

BRYANT: *Do you have a voice in the presentation or prominence of the story in the magazine, ranging from the blurbs to the art?*

DATLOW: As far as quotes, I have total control.

Decks are the sell-lines at the top of the story, e.g.: "Just when you were ready to go back in the water, the beach ate you up—Blood Beach." I try not to do them. I've

I don't think I usually make demands. I've been told that because I have so much power, that what I ask for is a demand and I just don't believe that.

always hated doing decks. I realize that the movie sell-lines are the same thing that we do. It was a revelation: "Oh, that's what I do." But, I hate doing decks because either I get it right away or it takes me all day.

As far as the prominence of fiction in each issue, absolutely not. It goes wherever it fits. Our managing editor has to do a cut and paste job, once we find out how many ads are going in, what ads and what shape ads, where they have to be placed. Then the magazine is laid out around the ads. Most commercial slick magazines are done that way. I have input with the art, but I do not have final say. Although if I am violently against something, and if I am tactful enough and diplomatic enough, I can usually get our art director to at least pick another picture. Although that will sometimes engender a huge fight. Sometimes the art department tries to do more interesting layouts. So they take a piece of art and slap it in the middle of the second page, which is very lovely, but then you have to lay the story around this little piece of art. Once we got an ad that ended up in the middle of the page for a Howard Waldrop story, "Man-Mountain Gentian." Poor Howard! The problem with that is, when you lay out a square ad in the middle of a page, you end up with very uneven looking text around that ad.

BRYANT: *A hollow square.*

DATLOW: It looks really awful. So anyway, I had to call Howard up and say, "Howard can you add some words here, can we fix this up somehow?" And he did it, he was very gracious about it. Then it turned out the advertiser had sent us the wrong size ad, so we had to do it again. I think we had to redo this three times. The last time I didn't even call him. That was a horror story.

I often suggest images for the art department to look for and occasionally suggest a specific painting or artist. None of the art is commissioned. It's usually found from art books, from museums, things on file from artists. The art department has been doing a damned good job considering that they don't use original art. When I give a story to the art department,

they know what to look for but they don't want to read the whole story. So I give them images: "How about something like that? Look for that kind of image. How about a little Rousseau for that? That would go well." So, I have input. Depending on how well the art department is getting along with the editorial department on any given day, my input will be either ignored or accepted graciously.

BRYANT: *How proprietary are you about discovering new talent, new authors? Is this something that you actively like to do? Is it something that you do as much as possible, when you can? What's your approach?*

DATLOW: It's just something that happens. I don't even consciously think about it.

BRYANT: *You didn't discover Gibson, of course, but you were right there at the beginning.*

DATLOW: I don't feel I discovered anybody. How can you discover someone? They're there. I like finding new writers and encouraging them. There are people who I have been writing to for a couple of years, who I've encouraged, but I usually don't publish them first. Maybe their first story isn't quite what I consider good enough for *Omni*, or quite what I want. But I will encourage them to go elsewhere. I'm glad that they are producing wonderful stuff and that they are being published. In a way I don't care about discovering new writers. I care more about encouraging new writers. As a matter of fact, I'm embarrassed when people say I discovered Gibson. Some people do say that, and I say "no I didn't". He had three stories published before I published him.

BRYANT: *At the same time, just because someone's name isn't sufficiently prominent to be emblazoned across the cover in a yellow banner, there's no prejudice against your buying a story by an unknown.*

DATLOW: Oh no, not at all. I love getting wonderful stories from new writers, I love getting wonderful stories from any writers. I published a first story in December, 1987: "Arachne" by Lisa Mason. I have never bought a story directly from

the slush pile, but I have bought stories from people who have never been published before. Lisa had never been published before, but she was recommended to me by Barry Malzberg and Bob Silverberg. They were aware of her writing.

The same thing happened with Dan Simmons. I published what was in fact his first sale, but I let *Twilight Zone* publish him first so he could win their prize. I think we bought the stories at the same time and I let them publish him first. But I had heard about him from Ed Bryant and Harlan Ellison. I didn't buy Lisa Mason's first story. I bought maybe her third story and she rewrote it for me. I never asked her to rewrite it, she kept rewriting it, like five times and finally I bought it.

The same thing happened with Marc Laidlaw's "400 Boys." He kept writing and rewriting this god-damned story over a period of three and a half years, and sending it to me again. It was rewritten completely and, finally, it was great. Actually, he did one rewrite too many and I made him go back to the previous rewrite. He had insisted on doing one more, adding a new character, and I said "What are you doing? Forget it! Don't over rewrite."

I love encouraging and publishing new writers but I don't really feel its a reflection on me. It's just something I love doing.

BRYANT: *Here's an off the wall question. I feel like I'm on the David Letterman show and will catch you unawares here.*

DATLOW: You do good pet tricks.

BRYANT: *Stupid writer tricks. I could ask about the dumbest stunts contributors have ever pulled, the most idiotic cover letter you've ever received . . .*

DATLOW: But you won't, right?

BRYANT: *I won't at this point but I will ask you this. Whether they are alive or dead . . .*

DATLOW: I prefer dead writers.

BRYANT: *Yeah, they're a lot easier to deal with, I know. But who are some of the writers you would like to see submit to *Omni* who never have submitted? In a way this*

is going to be a touchstone of your taste. As I say, it could be alive or dead. Who would you love to see sending stories in to you who aren't?

DATLOW: I would have liked to have seen something from Borgés. Can I count people who I haven't bought things from, but who I want to eventually, but not quite?

BRYANT: Oh, sure. As I say, alive or dead, or if they're already submitting but it hasn't worked out. Sure go ahead.

DATLOW: Jonathan Carroll. I've been wanting to get a story I really loved from him for ages. As a matter of fact, I have one waiting on my desk when I get back. T. Coraghessan Boyle, who I just turned down, but I like his writing a lot. *[Since this interview, Ellen has bought a story from Jonathan Carroll and commissioned a short-short by Boyle—spb]* Here I am, all the people I'm turning down. Iain Banks, I got a couple of stories from him and I really want to publish him someday.

There are two stories I'm very happy to have gotten, that I'm very proud of. I commissioned a story from William Burroughs and it was wonderful, it was terrific and it had no sex in it! I was so delighted. I have commissioned Patricia Highsmith to do a story for one of my horror short-shorts, and she sent in a very good one.

I would like people like Ruth Rendell because she writes psychological fiction and does things that are weird and off the wall. I think they can sometimes be considered fantastic. Thomas Pynchon, of course. J.D. Salinger, it's not science fiction but still I like him. Well, he's done weird stuff, he could do something with just a twist that I could publish, if he ever writes *anything* again.

I was just talking to Bob Sheckley and we were talking about him writing more stories. I was encouraging him to write stories like the ones I loved from the fifties and sixties, like: "The Wind is Rising."—his amazing, nasty stories with an edge that were also funny. His light-weight stories are funny, but they're not what I love and he knows that. He knows I have a



nasty edge to my taste. I hope he can write another one of those brilliant masterpieces he used to produce. I would just love that.

Who else? I would like a really good science fiction story from Doris Lessing. I was very disappointed by something that was recently submitted by her agent, that I think was in the Brighton program book. It was just a kind of vignette that went nowhere. But if she could do it, I'd like a really good, real science fiction story from her.

I'd love a science fiction story from Jayne Ann Phillips.

BRYANT: *The minimalists?*

DATLOW: Yeeach.

BRYANT: No?

DATLOW: Ich.

BRYANT: Okay, I take that of a sign of tacit disapproval. Bobby Ann Mason?

When I finished that story I thought, "I'd go out and kill myself rather than live in this universe." I didn't feel I could inflict that on my readers.



PHOTO BY GEORGE R.R. MARTIN

Please, Don DeLillo, I know you have done science fiction stories. I would like one from you.

DATLOW: I'm not familiar enough with her work, I don't know. I used to love John Fowles although I don't like what he's writing these days. If he could write something for me like *The Magus*, boy would I snap that up in a minute.

Margaret Atwood sent me a terrific, wonderful, well-written, brilliant story, that was also the bleakest science fiction story I've ever read in my life. It was from the same universe as *A Handmaid's Tale*. When I finished that story I thought, "I'd go out and kill myself rather than live in this uni—I didn't feel I could inflict that on my readers. So what if it wins the Nebula? It's a great story, but I didn't feel I could publish it. It was

too . . . let's go out and slit our wrists time. But I'd love to see another one from her that wasn't as bleak. I'd love a short story by Peter Straub. I've been trying to get Gahan Wilson to write a story for years—he tells me he's now working on one for me. In SF, Chip Delany, Joan Vinge, John Varley and J.G. Ballard.

BRYANT: *Sure. This is the question that I know everybody who is reading this interview . . .*

DATLOW: Don DeLillo! Don DeLillo. I want a science fiction story from him. I've been trying to get one. His agent, who I know, is a bitch about it. I don't think she'll pass my letter on to him.

BRYANT: *True. But if Don is listening . . .*

DATLOW: Please, Don DeLillo, I know you have done science fiction stories. I would like one from you. I'll send him a *Science Fiction Eye*.

BRYANT: *Right. Here's the question that I know everybody wants to ask every editor. It's one thing to talk about criteria or the submission policy of any given magazine or any given editor. But, most important, is it possible for any writer to sleep his or her way to the top?*

I want you to address this prob-

lem of friendly and/or professional relationships between editors and writers. Be as judicious as you care to be in your commentary, but does this exist in publishing in general? Does it exist in science fiction? Or is it something that has no application to reality? Or should it have any application to reality?

DATLOW: *[laughter]* I think it's very silly. Periodically, there are rumors that so-and-so is sleeping with all his or her authors and when you think about it, it's so ridiculous. I won't name names but one editor was accused of sleeping with all his authors. The live-in girl friend of the person who spread this rumor was published by the editor. Also a few feminist lesbians were published by this editor and many happily married women were also published by this editor. C'mon, give me a break, it's so stupid.

But, I'll give an example of something else. When I first got into science fiction and editing, I thought you don't want to go out with any of your authors, you can't do that. Don't mix business and pleasure at all, that's really bad. But I once had a discussion with a writer friend who said, "Well, gee, Ellen, that means you can only go out with people whose writing you hate, people who write terribly." I could see he had a point there. Why can't I go out with people whose writing I like, if I want to? I think the whole issue is bullshit, it's sour grapes from people who aren't getting published. They'll say, "Well, they got published because they slept with so-and-so." Actually, I think it's very funny, but it's untrue.

BRYANT: *Here's a scenario: You get in a new Stephen King story or a new Harlan Ellison story or a new Arthur C. Clarke story, one of the biggies, someone that you're probably going to expand your editorial budget to acquire and it's a terrible story.*

DATLOW: I would turn them down. I've rejected stories by some of the biggest names in and out of the field. Actually, I haven't turned King down. Shekley did and I think that was a mistake—because it was a good story.

BRYANT: *I was just wondering*

how you handled a situation like this?

DATLOW: It's tough.

BRYANT: *I sometimes suspect that editors are a little wary of trying to edit a superstar the same way they would deal with a mid-line writer or a newer writer.*

DATLOW: It's difficult because you don't want to offend the writer. I have turned down some very big names. Not because I wanted to be a snob and an asshole, but when I think something is awful, which happens occasionally if you are unlucky. If you're lucky, it will come through an agent and you can just tell the agent. That's the only time I like dealing with agents: when you're turning down someone you don't want to turn down and you're stuck doing it. Then it's very useful to have the agent be the buffer. But I'll try to be honest. If it's someone who I respect and like, I'll try to be as honest as I can without offending him and without thinking he'll write me a nasty letter back. I say: "I just don't think it was up to what you can do."

It's very hard. I want those people to submit stories again. And, some big-name writers are fine, they take rejection fine. It doesn't matter whether you're a big-name writer or not known at all. Your sensitivity depends on your own ego somehow. There are plenty of writers who haven't even been published who can be totally obnoxious when you turn them down. Someone like Stephen King could probably take rejection better than someone who is just starting to be published. I'm not sure, since I did not turn the story down by Stephen King. But it took me a hell of a long time to get him to submit another story to *Omni*. I don't know if it was that. Partly it was a misunderstanding. Every time I saw him I said, "Hi, remember me, I'm Ellen Datlow, how about sending me a story."

He finally did send me a story which was up for the World Fantasy Award: "The End of the Whole Mess." It came through his agent. I didn't deal with him personally until it came to the actual editorial work, because I had to cut some lines. When I talked to him I said, "I

really loved 'Mrs. Todd's Shortcut.' It's one of the best short stories I've ever seen. It's so romantic, I wish you had sent that to me." He said, "But you don't publish fantasy." I gritted my teeth and thought, is that why he hasn't sent me a story for five years? I said, "Yes, we do." That was just a misunderstanding.

BRYANT: *Handling rejection is one thing, but in the same manner, some will accept editing better than others.*

DATLOW: Definitely. And it doesn't matter how famous or unknown they are. You can have someone who is a professional in the sense of doing what has to be done and knowing how to behave in a professional manner, whether they are unpublished or published a thousand things, it doesn't seem to matter. It just depends on the individual person. As an editor you learn how to jolly certain people. Like you, you're horrible to edit.

BRYANT: *What do you mean I'm horrible to edit!*

DATLOW: You argue with me all the time over every word.

BRYANT: *But I always acquiesce after I have my token resistance.*

DATLOW: I think you know I don't edit just to do it. I don't want to tinker. I'm not a tinkerer. I don't want to rewrite your work. If I have a suggestion it's usually because I really believe something is wrong there. Occasionally, it's for my own neurotic reason and I can be talked out of it. But some people are more difficult than others to work with. And if they're your friends, you just yell at them and scream.

BRYANT: *Do you have a message out there for those who may be reading this interview and are tempted to send stories in to Omni?*

DATLOW: That was such a leading question.

BRYANT: *Isn't it though?*

DATLOW: Well, be persistent as far as sending stories in, I don't mean call me up or write me letters. I'm surprised at how many people don't send stories to *Omni* first, including professionals. For a while, I think I was getting first

look at most stories. Probably, because my inventory is so large and people hear things about stories languishing in inventory, I may not be getting first look at things lately. I don't know.

Please do send the stories to us. We do pay the best and I also have, I think, one of the fastest turnaround times in SF. Someone had done some survey in the *SFWA Forum* and it wasn't accurate. It claimed that we have a twenty-six day turnaround time, that wasn't clear whether it was for pros or slush. For slush it's probably true, but for pros or semi-pros or anyone I have ever heard of or has ever published, it's about two to three weeks. I'm a little behind because of Brighton and all my other trips this summer. But I try desperately to get things out within three weeks of the date on the manuscript. That doesn't mean change the date, I don't want to give people any ideas.

If you don't get a personal letter from an editor, generally you should not ask them why. If you get a form rejection, accept it, and just try again. Don't call or write and say, "You sent me a form rejection, can you give me more information?" No, I can't, I don't remember the manuscript. If I had liked the manuscript, I would have sent a personal letter.

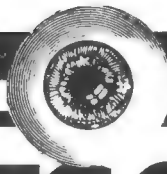
Be as professional as possible. Cover letters are only necessary, as far as I'm concerned, if you have some professional writing credentials. Otherwise, if you have nothing to say, if you wrote a poem in high school, I don't care. Don't write a cover letter, unless you've published your fiction someplace professionally or semi-professionally. I don't care that much about non-fiction. Although, if you're a famous non-fiction author, it might help. I've probably heard your name, anyway.

BRYANT: *Carl Sagan.*

DATLOW: We don't publish him. He doesn't like us. He thinks we've done nasty things to him.

Most people do appreciate it when they get a personal letter from an editor. But then, some people just don't know how rare

CONTINUED ON PAGE 88



THE AGBERG IDEOLOGY

CATSCAN

To speak with precision about the fantastic is like loading mercury with a pitchfork. Yet some are driven to confront this challenge. On occasion, a veteran SF writer will seriously and directly discuss the craft of writing science fiction.

A few have risked doing this in cold print. Damon Knight, for instance. James Blish (under a pseudonym.) Now Robert Silverberg steps deliberately into their shoes, with *Robert Silverberg's Worlds of Wonder: Exploring the Craft of Science Fiction* (Warner Books, 1987, \$17.95).

Here are thirteen classic SF stories by well-known genre authors. Most first appeared in genre magazines during the 1950s. These are stories which impressed Silverberg mightily as he began his career. They are stories whose values he tried hard to understand and assimilate. Each story is followed by Silverberg's careful, analytical notes.

And this stuff, ladies and gents, is the SF McCoy. It's all shirt-sleeve, street-level science fiction; every story in here is thoroughly crash-tested and cruises like a vintage Chevy.

Worlds of Wonder is remarkable for its sober lack of pretension. There's no high-tone guff here about how SF should claim royal descent from Lucian, or Cyrano de Bergerac, or Mary Shelley. Credit is given where credit is due. The genre's real founders were twentieth-century weirdos, whacking away at their manual typewriters, with amazing persistence and energy, for sweatshop pay.

They had a definite commonality of interest. Something more than a mere professional fraternity. Kind of like a disease.

In a long, revelatory introduction, Silverberg describes his own



By Bruce Sterling

first exposure to the vectors of the cultural virus: SF books.

"I think I was eleven, maybe twelve . . . [The] impact on me was overwhelming. I can still taste and feel the extraordinary sensations they awakened in me: it was a physiological thing, a distinct excitement, a certain metabolic quickening at the mere thought of handling them, let alone reading them. It must be like that for every new reader—apocalyptic thunderbolts and eerie unfamiliar music accompany you as you lurch and stagger, awed and shaken, into a bewildering new world of ideas and images, which is exactly the place you've been hoping to find all your life."

If this paragraph speaks to your very soul with the tongue of angels, then you need this anthology. Buy it immediately, read it carefully. It's full of home truths you won't find anywhere else.

This book is Silverberg's vicarious gift to his younger self, the teenager described in his autobiographical introduction: an itchy, over-bright kid, filled with the fever-

ish conviction that to become a Science Fiction Writer must surely be the moral pinnacle of the human condition.

And Silverberg knows very well that the kids are still out there, and that the virus still spreads. He can feel their hot little hands reaching out plaintively in the dark. And he's willing, with a very genuine magnanimity, to help these sufferers out. Just as he himself was helped by an earlier SF generation, by Mr. Kornbluth, and Mr. Knight, and Mr. and Mrs. Kuttner, and all those other rad folks with names full of consonants.

Silverberg explains his motives clearly, early on. Then he discusses his qualifications to teach the SF craft. He mentions his many awards, his fine reviews, his length of service in the SF field, and, especially, his success at earning a living. It's a very down-home, pragmatic argument, with an aw-

shucks, workin'-guy, just-folks attitude, very typical of the American SF milieu. Silverberg doesn't claim superior knowledge of writerly principle (as he might well). He doesn't openly pose as a theorist or ideologue, but as a modest craftsman, offering rules of thumb.

I certainly don't scorn this offer, but I do wonder at it. Such modesty may well seem laudable, but its unspoken implications are unsettling. It seems to show an unwillingness to tackle SF's basic roots, to establish a solid conceptual grounding. SF remains pitchforked mercury, jelly nailed to a tree; there are ways to strain a living out of this ichor, but very few solid islands of theory.

Silverberg's proffered definition of science fiction shows the gooey-ness immediately. The definition is rather long, and comes in four points:

1. An underlying speculative concept, systematically developed in a way that amounts to an exploration of the consequences of al-

lowing such a departure from known reality to impinge on the universe as we know it.

2. An awareness by the writer of the structural underpinnings (the "body of scientific knowledge") of our known reality, as it is currently understood, so that the speculative aspects of the story are founded on conscious and thoughtful departures from those underpinnings rather than on blithe ignorance.

3. Imposition by the writer of a sense of limitations somewhere in the assumptions of the story . . .

4. A subliminal knowledge of the feel and texture of true science fiction, as defined in a circular and subjective way from long acquaintance with it.

SF is notoriously hard to define, and this attempt seems about as good as anyone else's, so far. Hard thinking went into it, and it deserves attention. Yet point four is pure tautology. It is the Damon Knight dictum of "SF is what I point at when I say 'SF,'" which is very true indeed. But this can't conceal deep conceptual difficulties.

Here is Silverberg defining a "Story." "A story is a machine that enlightens: a little ticking contrivance . . . It is a pocket universe . . . It is an exercise in vicarious experience . . . It is a ritual of exorcism and purgation. It is a set of patterns and formulas. It is a verbal object, an incantation made up of rhythms and sounds."

Very fluent, very nice. But: "A science fiction story is all those things at once, and something more." Oh? What is this "something more?" And why does it take second billing to the standard functions of a generalized "story?"

How can we be certain that "SF" is not, in fact, something basically alien to "Story-telling?" "Science fiction is a branch of fantasy," Silverberg asserts, finding us a cozy spot under the sheltering tree of Literature. Yet how do we really know that SF is a "branch" at all?

The alternative would be to state that science fiction is not a true kind of "fiction" at all, but something genuinely monstrous. Something that limps and heaves

and convulses, without real antecedents, in a conceptual no-man's land. Silverberg would not like to think this; but he never genuinely refutes it.

Yet there is striking evidence of it, even in *Worlds of Wonder* itself. Silverberg refers to "antediluvian SF magazines, such as *Science Wonder Stories* from 1929 and *Amazing Stories* from 1932 . . . The primitive technique of many of the authors didn't include such frills as the ability to create characters or write dialog . . . [T]he editors of the early science fiction magazines had found it necessary to rely on hobbyists with humpty-dumpty narrative skills; the true storytellers were off writing for the other pulp magazines, knocking out westerns or adventure tales with half the effort for twice the pay."

A nicely dismissive turn of phrase. But notice how we confront, even in very early genre history, two distinct castes of writer. We have the "real storytellers," pulling down heavy bread writing westerns, and "humpty-dumpty hobbyists" writing this weird-ass stuff that doesn't even have real dialog in it. A further impudent question suggests itself: if these "storytellers" were so "real," how come they're not still writing successfully today, for *Argosy* and *Spicy Stories* and *Aryan Atrocity Adventure*? How come, among the former plethora of pulp fiction magazines, the science fiction zines still survive? Did the "storytellers" somehow ride in off the range to rescue Humpty Dumpty? If so, why couldn't they protect their own herd?

What does "science fiction" really owe to "fiction," anyway? This conceptual difficulty will simply not go away, ladies and gentlemen. It is a cognitive dissonance at the heart of our genre. Here is John Kessel, suffering the ideological itch, Eighties version, in SF EYE #1:

"Plot, character and style are not mere icing . . . Any fiction that conceives of itself as a vehicle for something called 'ideas' that can be inserted into and taken out of the story like a passenger in a Toyota is doomed, in my perhaps staid and outmoded opinion, to a very low level of achievement."

A "low level of achievement." Not even Humpty Dumpty really wants this. But what is the "passenger," and what are the "frills?" Is it the "storytelling," or is it the "something more?" Kessel hits a nerve when he demands, "What do you mean by an 'idea' anyway?" What a difficult question this is!

The craft of storytelling has been explored for many centuries, in many cultures. Blish called it "a huge body of available technique," and angrily demanded its full use within SF. And in *Worlds of Wonder*, Silverberg does his level best to convey the basic mechanics. Definitions fly, helpful hints abound. A story is "the working out of a conflict." A story "has to be built around a pattern of oppositions." Storytelling can be summed up in a three-word formula: "purpose, passion, perception." And on and on.

But where are we to find the craft of the "something more?" What in hell is the "something more?" "Ideas" hardly begins to describe it. Is it "wonder"? Is it "transcendence"? Is it "visionary drive," or "conceptual novelty," or even "cosmic fear"? Here is Silverberg, at the very end of his book:

"It was that exhilaration and excitement that drew us to science fiction in the first place, almost invariably when we were very young; it was for the sake of that exhilaration and excitement that we took up the writing of it; and it was to facilitate the expression of our visions and fantasies that we devoted ourselves with such zeal to the study of the art and craft of writing."

Very well put, but the dichotomy lurches up again. The art and craft of writing *what*, exactly? In this paragraph, the "visions and fantasies" briefly seize the driver's seat of the Kessel Toyota. But they soon dissipate into phantoms again. Because they are so ill-defined, so mercurial, so desperately lacking in basic conceptual soundness. They are our stock in trade, our *raison d'être*, and we still don't know what to make of them.

Worlds of Wonder may well be the best book ever published about the craft of science fiction. Silverberg works nobly, and he deserves great credit. The unspoken pain that

lies beneath the surface of his book is something with which the genre has never successfully come to terms. The argument is as fresh today as it was in the days of *Science Wonder Stories*.

This conflict goes very deep indeed. It is not a problem confined to the craft of writing SF. It seems to me to be a schism of the modern Western mindset, a basic lack of cultural integration between what we feel, and what we know. It is an inability to speak naturally, with conviction, from the heart, of the things that Western rationality has taught us. This is a profound problem, and the fact that science fiction deals with it so directly, is a sign of science fiction's cultural importance.

We have no guarantee that this conflict will ever be resolved. It may not be resolvable. SF writers have begun careers, succeeded greatly, grown old and honored, and died in the shadow of this dissonance. We may forever have SF "stories" whose narrative structure is bubbed with expository lumps. We may always have escapist pulp adventures that avoid true imagination, substituting the bogus exoticism that Blish defined as "calling a rabbit a 'smeerp.'"

We may even have beautifully written, deeply moving tales of classic human conflict—with only a reluctant dab of genre flavor. Or we may have the opposite: the legacy of Stapledon, Gernsback, and Lem, those non-stories bereft of emotional impact and human interest, the constructions Silverberg rightly calls "vignettes" and "reports."

I don't see any stories in *World of Wonder* that resolve this dichotomy. They're swell stories, and they deliver the genre payoff in full. But many of them contradict Silverberg's most basic assertions about "storytelling." "Four in One" by Damon Knight is a political parable whose hero is a rock-ribbed Competent Man whose reactions are utterly nonhuman. "Fondly Fahrenheit" by Alfred Bester is a one-shot tour-de-force dependent on weird grammatical manipulation. "Hot-house" by Brian Aldiss is a vision

ary picaresque with almost no conventional structure. "The New Prime" by Jack Vance is six jam-packed alien vignettes very loosely stitched together. "Day Million" showcases Frederik Pohl bluntly haranguing his readers. It's as if Silverberg picked these stories deliberately to demonstrate a deep distrust of his own advice.

But to learn to tell "good stories" is excellent advice for any kind of writer, isn't it? Well-constructed "stories" will certainly sell in science fiction. They will win awards, and bring whatever fame and wealth is locally available. Silverberg knows this is true. His own career proves it. His work possesses great technical facility. He writes stories with compelling opening hooks, with no extraneous detail, with paragraphs that mesh, with dialog that advances the plot, with neatly balanced beginnings, middles and ends.

And yet, this ability has not been a total Royal Road to success for him. Tactfully perhaps, but rather surprisingly, *Worlds of Wonder* does not mention Silverberg's four-year "retirement" from SF during the '70s. For those who missed it, there was a dust-up in 1976, when Silverberg publicly complained that his work in SF was not garnering the critical acclaim that its manifest virtues deserved. These were the days of *Dying Inside*, *The Book of Skulls*, *Shadrach in the Furnace*—sophisticated novels with deep, intense character studies, of unimpeachable literary merit. Silverberg was not alone in his conclusion that these groundbreaking works were pearls cast before swine. Those who shared Silverberg's literary convictions could only regard the tepid response of the SF public as philistinism.

But was it really? Critics still complain at him today; take Geoff Ryman's review of *The Conglomeroid Cocktail Party*, a recent Silverberg collection, in *Foundation* 37. "He is determined to write beautifully and does . . . He has most of the field beaten by an Olympic mile." And yet: "As practiced by Silverberg, SF is a minor

art form, like some kinds of verse, to be admired for its surface polish and adherence to form."

This critical plaint is a symptom of hunger for the "something more." But where are we to find its mercurial secrets? Not in the story-telling alembics of *Worlds of Wonder*.

Why, then, is Silverberg's book so very valuable to the SF writer of ambition? There are many reasons. Silverberg's candid reminiscences casts vital light into the social history of the genre. The deep structures of our subculture, of our traditions, must be understood by anyone who wants to transcend them. To have no "ideology," no theory of SF and its larger purposes, is to be the unknowing puppet of its unwritten rules. These invisible traditions are actually only older theories, now disguised as common sense.

The same goes for traditional story values. Blatant solecisms are the Achilles heel of the wild-eyed SF visionary. If this collection teaches anything, it's that one can pull the weirdest, wackiest, off-the-wall moves in SF, and still win big. But one must do this deliberately, with a real understanding of the consequences. One must learn to recognize, and avoid, the elementary blunders of bad fiction: the saidbookisms, the point-of-view violations, the careless lapses of logic, the pointless digressions, the idiot plots, the insulting clichés of character. *Worlds of Wonder* is a handbook for accomplishing that. It's kindly and avuncular and accessible and fun to read.

And some readers are in special luck. You may be one of them. You may be a young Robert Silverberg, a mindblown, too-smart kid, dying to do to the innocent what past SF writers have done to you. You may be boiling over with the Holy Spirit, yet wondering how you will ever find the knack, the discipline, to put your thoughts into a form that compels attention from an audience, a form that will break you into print. If you are this person, *Worlds of Wonder* is a precious gift. It is your battle plan. ●



MANIFESTATIONS OF THE HOLY: The Short Fiction of John Crowley

John Crowley has achieved critical recognition—and a measure of readerly success (his *Aegypt* occupied the number one hardcover slot on the *Locus* bestseller list at the time of this writing)—on the basis of his outstanding novels: *The Deep*, *Beasts*, *Engine Summer*, *Little, Big* and the aforementioned *Aegypt*. If pressed, the average reader might also recall that Crowley had a story "Snow" in the November, 1985, *Omni*, this piece appearing later on the 1986 Hugo ballot.

However, there exists a Secret History of John Crowley, a parallel body of work, which has undeservedly achieved little notice. Fittingly, for an author who deals so extensively with apocryphal shadows, John Crowley's stories are mainly unknown or overlooked, moldering texts buried among the drift of words that blizzards down on the SF readership these days.

These shorter pieces of Crowley's provide an hour or two of good reading. (All told, they add up to no more than forty pages, and would only make a fraction of a book, which perhaps explains why they have gone uncollected.) They consist of four capable stories and two superlative ones, the youngest pair of stories. That's the main reason to look them up. Additionally, however, examination of these stories provides new insights into the novels, casting a different light that dispels certain shadows while creating others. To switch metaphors, the stories are useful and different points of vantage from which one may get altered vistas on the mountains of the novels.

(I should mention at this point that one of Crowley's stories—a mysterious seventh—was unavail-

TERMINAL LUNCH



ILLUSTRATION BY DAN STEFFAN

By Paul Di Filippo

able to me for this article. "The Single Excursion of Caspar Law" appeared in an issue of *Gallery* magazine, circa 1978, and I was unable to obtain a copy. It pleased me that, like *Architecture of Country Houses*, one of Crowley's own texts should be wary of access. And although the missing story might invalidate my whole thesis—like one of the many reversals or shifts of perception common to Crowley's fiction—I tend to doubt it, and feel confident in going ahead on the basis of the six stories accessible to me).

These six stories—to a greater or lesser degree—illustrate what is perhaps the main thread of all Crowley's work: the irruption of some holy force into mundane life.

Let's allow the unnamed author-narrator of "Novelty" to phrase it:

He had really only the one subject, if subject was the word for it, this idea of a notion or a holy thing growing clear in the stream of time, being made manifest in unexpected ways to an assortment of

people: the revelation itself wasn't important, it could be anything, almost. Beyond that he had only one interest, the seasons, which he could describe endlessly and with all the passion of a country-bred boy grown old in the city.

At the risk of confusing author with protagonist, I would like to propose that this little speech is John Crowley rationally, wistfully, assessing his own strengths and sources. Consider the Visitor in *The Deep*; the supernal leos in *Beasts*; the angels in *Engine Summer*; the Faeries in *Little, Big*; and angels again in *Aegypt*. Each one a manifestation of the holy intruding on the lives of the secular characters. (And the idea of a simple notion possessing a power strong as any supernatural entity is particularly well realized in this latter work).

I do not intend to be didactic and entirely reduce either the stories or the novels to this single theme; they are more multiplex and splendid than that, especially the longer works. (And in the following examination of Crowley's stories, I will point out other topics and points of interest, like any good tour guide.) Still, I do believe that, buried deep like a ley of power, or running prominent across the landscape like the freeway from Kentucky to New York, this theme of holy intervention permeates Crowley's work, and can be adduced in the shorter works.

"ANTIQUITIES"

Whispers, edited by Stuart Schiff, 1977.

This story, Crowley's first in print, is perhaps the slightest. Cast as a traveller's tale, it tells of a plague of feline succubi in the English countryside during the last century, caused by the use of mummified cats as improbable fertilizer. Its primary interest for readers of *Little, Big* lies in its evocation of English country life. The details Crowley employs derive in large part from the autobiographical *Lark Rise to Candleford*, which provides the opening epi-

graph to *Little, Big*.

Additionally, the portrayal of Egypt under the British as a mystical land foreshadows Crowley's latest book.

"WHERE SPIRITS GAT THEM HOME"
Shadows, edited by Charles Grant, 1978.

Many threads bind this story to the rest of Crowley's work.

The plot concerns the automobile journey of a man and his elderly aunt to an ancestral home in Vermont. During the trip, the nephew, a clergyman, details his peculiar interpretation of Christianity, an interpretation that amounts to a new heresy: neither salvation nor damnation is assured. The latter, in fact does not exist, and the former can only be achieved by a supreme act of will and belief, not by dispensation from God. In mid-discussion, an accident occurs, and, on the point of death, the aunt must choose in a split-second whether she will accompany her nephew to his particular heaven. She rejects salvation, preferring true non-existence to an afterlife.

This concern with new heresies is to be seen again many times in Crowley's fiction: in "Novelty", most prominently, but also in *Aegypt* with its focus on the figure of Giordano Bruno.

In an interview with Crowley published in *Science Fiction Digest*, January/February 1982, he says, regarding *Little, Big*: "I wanted to write a novel about a family and a religion, a family that was part of a religion. It's harder than you'd think to make up a religion."

Heresy, particularly if it's a drastic enough revision, frequently amounts to the formation of a new religion. Consequently, "Where Spirits . . ." exhibits affinities with *Little, Big* also. Even the aunt's voluntary exclusion from paradise rings strange changes on Smoky's exclusion from the final migration to Faerie.

Lastly, we see the journey motif, the travelling to some out-of-the-way place made sacred—transfigured—by childhood or even extracorporeal memories, somehow lost, and now recovered.

"THE REASON FOR THE VISIT"
Interfaces, edited by Ursula Le Guin and Virginia Kidd, 1980.

The once-again-unnamed narrator of this tale experiences a ghostly visit from Virginia Woolf in his New York apartment. This single sentence summarizes the action of "The Reason . . ." Obviously, the pattern of supramundane intrusion on earthly existence is recast here. But this story offers another slant on one of Crowley's major concerns: Time.

Consider these two quotes, the first from the story in question, (the point of view is that of the departing spirit of Woolf herself), the second from *Little, Big*.

"She turned, orienting herself. As she did so, she sensed Time as an enormous conical spiral. She sensed it tightening as it rose, tightening toward some furious stasis of immediacy. Time is compressible; it was quite simple really, she could compress it to a point. She could compress it all into the tiniest of compasses..."

"It is another world entirely, and it is enclosed within this one; it is in a sense a universal retreating mirror image of this one, with a peculiar geography I can only describe as infundibular . . . I mean by this that the other world is composed of a series of concentric rings, which as one penetrates into the other world, grow larger. The further in you go, the bigger it gets."

Here we have both Time and Space imaged in the same terms, a funnel or spiral shape. Considering the interchangeability with which Space and Time are treated in Crowley's work—in *Engine Summer* particularly, where Time is likened to a spatial distancing (page 167)—the two quotes amount to a full, coherent description of the continuum Crowley's earthbound and spiritual characters inhabit.

"THE GREEN CHILD"
Elsewhere, edited by Terri Windling and Mark Arnold, 1981.

Ostensibly a retelling of a medieval legend, "The Green Child" concerns two exiles from Faerie, a brother and sister trapped on earth. The brother sickens and dies, the sister lives on, to become merely mortal. The breaching of earthly routine by a visit from beyond is seen again.

Of greater interest in this very

short piece is how Crowley depicts the girl's memories undergoing transmutation over time, until half of what she repeats to her mortal listeners about Faerie is fiction.

In the interview cited previously, Crowley says, "I believe there is a story which appears in countless different forms—fairy tales, myths, and so on—and which has a physiological meaning that is incontrovertible."

It does not seem too farfetched to me to see the process whereby the Green Child tailors her memories to fit the needs of her audience as an example of the individual author conforming, almost unconsciously, to the dictates of this Ur-story.

"NOVELTY"
Interzone #5, Autumn, 1983.

With this story and the next, Crowley hits the peak of his short fiction.

"Novelty" is really a compressed novel, as the punning title hints. In the course of a few pages, the protagonist, a writer, sits alone in a bar and mentally plots out his next book. The book will be the story of a parallel world, one in which Christ refused to be crucified, and in which all history thereafter was different.

Crowley succeeds in painting a vivid, satisfying picture of the book that would result from this conception. Once again, a religion is invented and explored, and the impact of the holy (the apocryphal Jesus) on quotidian life is examined.

Of greater interest is the fact that the writer in the bar is a character study for Pierce Moffet, the protagonist of *Aegypt*.

Consider. Like Pierce, the writer is a native of Kentucky, whose childhood was deeply influenced by religion. Like Pierce, he is now a city-dweller. Like Pierce, he is seized with a grand conception for a book which he hopes will do more than entertain. (The scene in "Novelty" with the author's agent has its parallel in *Aegypt*, with both writers trying vainly to explain their conceptions to bemused listeners.)

Also like Pierce, the nameless character has woman-trouble, is foolish in love and suffers from a broken marriage. While sitting on

his stool, he notices a woman enter the bar. There is a subtle interplay between them, interspersed between the sections devoted to the imaginary novel, which is shattered when the woman leaves and the bartender reveals that she is his wife. Compare the triangle between Pierce, Rosie and Spofford in *Aegypt*.

The role played by Vermont in the story, as a sort of pastoral milieu where visions occur, harks back to "Where Spirits Gat Them Home," and forward to the Faraway Hills of *Aegypt*.

"Novelty" stands, then, both as a fine evocation of a world that never was and as a kind of missing episode from an *Aegypt* that never was.

"SNOW"

Omni, November, 1985.

There are few segues between succeeding stories in an author's *oeuvre* more sly than that between "Novelty" and "Snow." The third paragraph from the end of "Novelty" is a beautiful depiction of a snowstorm, and a vision of the author-protagonist, grown-old, still working on his "false history." This image dovetails neatly into the very title of the next story Crowley was to publish, two years later.

"Snow" deals with both physical snow, and the "snow" of signal-interference. It is atypical, in that it is the most science-fictional story Crowley has ever published. All the preceding ones qualify as fantasy. "Snow" is more akin in tone and spirit to *Beasts* or *Engine Summer* than to any of the later novels.

In "Snow," a service exists which records 8,000 hours of a person's life, which may be viewed by loved ones after the person's death. The protagonist loses his wife to an alpine accident (literal snow), and, at first unwillingly, later obsessively, begins to view the recordings of them together.

There is only one catch: playback is random. The narrator notices, after some time, that the preponderance of winter scenes begin to fill the screen. At the same time the scenes are deteriorating. Literal and figurative snow converge, and the narrator learns "There isn't any summer there [in the past]."

Excerpts from an interview with John Crowley by Thomas Disch from the Jan/Feb 1982 issue of *Science Fiction Digest*.

I believe there is a Story which appears in countless different forms—fairy tales, myths, and so on—and which has a physiological meaning that is incontrovertible. Facts don't really matter. Whether the Story matches the everyday world we live in is, in a certain sense, an irrelevance. Certainly it's irrelevant within a work of art. In a work of art you have a Story in which all the characters are engaged, and that Story is the most important thing in their lives. In a novel, as Forster has pointed out, the characters spend very little time eating and doing business and carrying out ordinary tasks. They spend most of their time involved in the Story, which is usually a love story. And things may happen in the Story in a different way than they do outside the Story.

You can respond to the Story because it symbolizes the way we feel the world is ordered. Though, especially in my novels, the reader ought to be clued that the story is about a Story. When you read *Engine Summer* or *Little, Big* you ought to be able to say, "Wait a minute. This is a book I have in my hand. I am being told about the nature of the book I have in my hand."

Joseph Campbell says: "In mythology woman represents the totality of what can be known; the man is the hero who comes to know it."

DISCH: A few feminists might object to that.

CROWLEY: They have no more reason to object to that than to an electrician

talking about male and female plugs. This has nothing to do with real live living human males and female.

You asked me, before, about the nature of magic, about the religious side to the realm of Faerie. To explain that, I have to go back to when I was fifteen or so. I grew up Catholic. At about age fifteen I rebelled against it. One of the main causes of my rebellion was that there was no mystery in it. No, there were mysteries, but they were all neatly labeled. There were a specific number of mysteries, like the Incarnation and the Trinity, that there was no thinking about, and everything else was figured out. That depressed me. The mysteries that have intrigued me since then are those moments when the world exfoliates in some sudden, surprising way.

Power is a joke in *Little, Big*. Power is always able to be gotten around. Power has no power in *Little, Big*—which is one of the great and encouraging and delightful things about the book, because you find yourself in a world in which power has no power; love has power.

It's very uplifting, and I think that's something literature should do. Literature should present uplifting situations and show you what the world would be like if everybody was nice, everything was nice. No excuse needs to be made for that. On the other hand, it eliminates by fiat, by the act of the writer, certain difficulties we all know in our own lives. I'd like to deal with some of those too in later books. ●

The story is a fine weaving together of metaphors, and a sharp delineation of character. Its affinities with Crowley's other work lie mainly in its preoccupation with Time and Memory, although the trope of revelation from the past and how it affects one man could be linked to the "notion . . . growing clear in the stream of time" from "Novelty," quoted at the start of this article.

John Crowley's short stories, we can conclude, provide two distinct pleasures. They can be read and enjoyed strictly on their own merits, which, especially in the

last two pieces are not inconsiderable. Or they can be viewed as additional stones in the mosaic of his whole work. Stones that speak.

"Do you mean . . . pantheism?" [asked the agent].

"No. No. The opposite. In that kind of religion the trees and the sky and the weather stand for God or some kind of supernatural unity. In my religion, God and all the rituals and sacraments would stand for the real world. The religion would be a means of perceiving the real world in a sacramental sky. A Gnostic ascension. A secret at the heart of it. And the secret is—everything. Common reality. The day outside the church window." ●

—"Novelty"

HEATSEEKER

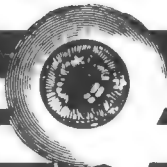
JOHN SHIRLEY

Illustrated by Harry O. Morris
Introduction by William Gibson
Edited by Stephen P. Brown



Coming this fall from
SCREAM/PRESS

P.O. Box 481146
Los Angeles, CA 90045



BARE-FACED MESSIAH:
The True Story of
L. Ron Hubbard
by Russell Miller
Henry Holt & Co., 1988, \$19.95
ISBN 0-8050-0654-0

On March 10, 1911 a boy was born in Tilden, Nebraska. Within a couple of years the boy's family moved to a small brick house in Helena, Montana. His father was a career Navy man, an Assistant Supply Officer. But for a visit to his father on Guam in his teens—and a brief, Navy-organized, recreational trip to China, the boy had an unremarkable childhood.

The boy grew into a blustering paranoid congenital liar. In the years that followed, the small brick house transformed into vast estates in Montana, where the boy says he spent his childhood roping cattle, hunting coyotes and the like. The trip to Guam and China became years spent traveling the Far East alone, in his teens, learning about life from mystical Eastern holy men. After trying his hand, unsuccessfully at several careers, eventually the boy found a niche pounding out reams of adventure stories for the pulp magazines that proliferated in the Thirties.

The boy's fiction became successful, exploiting his one major talent: he could lie dramatically and convincingly.

One day the boy stumbled onto a rudimentary psychoanalytic concept; that certain traumas could be buried deep enough to be hidden from the conscious mind. If the sufferer were made to recall the trauma, and to consciously relive it, the trauma's effects on the psyche would be lessened. The boy, in his arrogance and ignorance, assumed he had found the key to curing all humanity's ills. So he wrote a book.

The boy would have remained a fairly silly and pathetic figure, but for one thing. He was blessed with an intense personal magnetism. Regardless of the nonsense of which he spoke, those to whom he spoke believed him. And even those who did not believe were fascinated, caught in the charisma

EYETRACKS



L. Ron Hubbard torturing tomato plants

PHOTO BY REX FEATURES, LTD.

in the twentieth century. Thus his techniques founded a religion.

As the boy's religion grew, so did the controversy surrounding it. The Church of Scientology reflected its creator and became an organization of cold-blooded, humorless paranoids, subverting the weak and confused and viciously attacking any form of criticism.

The boy spent the last twenty years of his life running and hiding from enemies real and imagined. First on a large ship in a hilarious series of Keystone Kops at sea adventures (I particularly love the image of the boy gathering together his crew—good Scientologists all, but not a sailor in the bunch—and exhorting them to regress back through their past lives, hunting for a time when one or another of them was a sea captain—and explain what to do with the ship, which was in danger of foundering at the time), then hopping from hide-

away to hideaway in America. During his last years, he became an increasingly bizarre Howard Hughes-like recluse, waited on hand and foot by a group of adolescent girls in identical shorts and halter tops called "Messengers." The Messengers and what few other people he would allow to see him blindly indulged his every whim, and treated his every utterance as gospel, reinforcing his strange personality quirks.

To his death, in January, 1986, the boy never grew up. Throughout his life he told elaborate lies to bolster his self-image; he demonstrated a deep hatred of women—reflected in his shabby treatment of a series of wives; and he was petty and vindictive to a degree usually found only in children—witness the extensive series of letters in his FBI file in which he attempted to turn in everyone who irritated him for being a communist spy.

The Church of Scientology he left behind is fascinating in the way it has codified the foibles and shortcomings of its founder into dogma. The relentlessly silly was

Reviews & Opinions

of the telling.

The boy became famous, and thousands read his book. They studied his techniques for curing "engrams"—his term for the buried traumas—because for some people, after a fashion, it worked. So does psychoanalysis, from which his techniques were so crudely derived. But in the early Fifties, psychoanalysis was expensive and poorly understood. The boy's book was cheap and easy to understand.

The boy was trying, originally, to earn a lot of money—and he eventually succeeded beyond anyone's wildest dreams. But he had spent so many years telling so many people such elaborate lies that he began to believe them himself. The wilder his lies became, the more the people around him believed. One day he took his "engram" theory a step further. He convinced his followers (by now numbering in the thousands) that "engrams" in previous lives needed to be dealt with. If you were once a soldier in Napoleon's army, and you saw a friend die horribly, it could be screwing up your love-life

treated with utmost seriousness. Take, for example, this description of the hunt for "engrams" in extremely past lives:

"Many engrams, for example, could be traced back to clams. The clam's big problem was that there was a conflict between the hinge that wanted to open and the hinge that wanted to close. It was easy to restimulate the engram caused by the defeat of the weaker hinge, Hubbard pronounced, by asking a pre-clear to imagine a clam on a beach opening and closing its shell very rapidly and at the same time making an opening and closing motion with thumb and forefinger. This gesture, he said, would upset large numbers of people.

"By the way," he warned, "your discussion of these incidents with the uninitiated in Scientology can cause havoc. Should you describe the clam to some one (sic), you may restimulate it in him to the extent of causing severe jaw pain. One such victim, after hearing about a clam death, could not use his jaws for three days."

Hubbard's constant paranoid lashing out at foes real and imagined, too, has become Church policy:

"He derided apostates as 'squirrels' and recommended merciless litigation to drive them out of business. The law can be used very easily to harass, and enough harassment on somebody who is simply on the thin edge anyway will generally be sufficient to cause his professional decrease," he wrote in one of his interminable bulletins, casually adding, "If possible, of course, ruin him utterly."

"If attacked on some vulnerable point by anyone or anything or any organization, always find or manufacture enough threat against them to cause them to sue for peace . . . Don't ever defend, always attack." [emphasis added]

Russell Miller has written a compelling and thoroughly researched biography of L. Ron Hubbard. On one level, this is a vastly entertaining and compulsively readable narrative of one of the oddest and funniest lives you will encounter.

But ultimately it is a tragic story. Too many people have been hurt and continue to be hurt by this man and his legacy. Often these wholesale attempts at life-wrecking are halted in time—note the story of Paulette Cooper in this issue's guest editorial, and witness the fact that currently high ranking members of the church (including Hubbard's wife) are in prison for

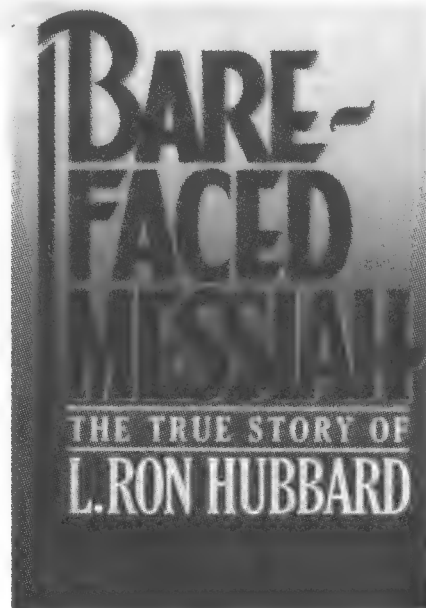
infiltrating the IRS and FBI and stealing tens of thousands of documents to use against their enemies. But all too often, they succeed, and seriously damage the lives of those who dare to question.

For those who have tried to puzzle out the bits of truth in the vast mountain of lies and distortions about the mysterious life of L. Ron Hubbard, *Bare-Faced Messiah* comes as a welcome relief. Miller throws a stark spotlight on a truly deranged human being. One of the Hubbard's childhood friends, Andrew Richardson, is quoted as saying: "Old Hubbard was the greatest con artist who ever lived."

So much misinformation has been spread by the Church, so much of the public perception of Hubbard is a lie, that I cannot urge you strongly enough to find and read this book. If enough people read it, then perhaps the increasing encroachment of Scientology into all walks of life (but specifically into our corner of the world, SF, as represented by Bridge and New Era Publications, and the Writers of the Future and Artists of the Future programs) will be blown away by a wave of laughter.

But you'd better hurry. As I write, the Church—in one of its legally separate publishing arms, New Era—has just won an injunction against this book's further distribution in the US. (According to *Publisher's Weekly*, this followed an incredible attempt by the Church to simply buy the publishing rights outright from Henry Holt just before the book was to be shipped. To their credit, Holt declined.) This injunction was based on the precedent set by the "Salinger vs. Random House" case, that of unauthorized quotations of copyrighted documents. This is doubly funny. First, because the book has been in print for over a year in England, Canada and Australia, at least. Second, because the most damning material Miller has come up with consists of Hubbard's FBI and CIA files accessed by the Freedom of Information Act, and innumerable interviews with people who knew him. The material quoted from Hubbard's own writings and Church publications is generally used in the book as ironic counterpoint. ●

—spb



BARE-FACED MESSIAH: by Russell Miller

Trust a pro to do it right.

We have before us *Bare-Faced Messiah*, a book which appeared in England in 1987, simultaneously with the appearance in the U.S. of Bent Corydon and L. Ron Hubbard, Jr.'s *L. Ron Hubbard: Messiah or Madman?* [See the Vesco review of Corydon's book in *EYE* #3]

Miller is a very different writer than Corydon. Rather than a disaffected Scientologist with an axe to grind, he is a professional journalist and biographer with prior books to his credit on the Getty oil empire and the Hefner (*Playboy*) enterprise. Where Corydon seemed to be writing off the top of his head, Miller proves to be an amazingly thorough and effective researcher.

I don't know how Miller got access to some of the documents he cites—I imagine that the Freedom of Information Act was resorted to, and had to be balanced against the Right of Privacy Act. But one way or another, Miller managed to get ahold of Hubbard's college transcript, his World War II service record, his Veterans Administration case file, and extensive court records and government documents from the U.S., Britain, and Australia.

He also tracked down and interviewed many of Hubbard's associates in the world of science

fiction, as well as surviving members of Ron's several families. (Hubbard was himself an only child, but his mother came from a large family and there are numerous surviving relatives; Hubbard himself seems to have left a bewildering mix of widows and offspring.)

Possibly Miller's greatest contribution is his investigation of events in the Hubbard Mythos, and his ability to match them with occurrences in the real world. For example, his early scientific expedition to the Caribbean—part of the Hubbard Mythos being his exploits as an explorer—is not fictitious. But . . . it turns out to have been more of a college-boy summer vacation lark that accomplished nothing of scientific value, but certainly gave Ron and his chums a great conversation piece once it was over.

Similarly, his World War II naval service really did include command of a sub-chaser. Hubbard's ship conducted a running battle off the Pacific Coast of the continental U.S., lasting several days and including the firing of many rounds of ammunition. The vanquished foe seems to have been either some chunks of driftwood or maybe a couple of bales of hay that somehow got dumped into the ocean. The whole sequence, as Miller reconstructs it, is one of the funniest things I've ever read.

And in a similar vein, Hubbard's vaunted, legendary "sea Org," his private fleet of gleaming white supermodern ships on which he is supposed to have spent years cruising the Mediterranean. It turns out to have been an aggregation of two or three tubs. They went floundering and blundering from port to port, regarded as something between a menace to safe navigation and a bunch of laughable clowns in seafarers' costumes.

I imagine that the Church will be as eager to suppress Miller's book as they were Corydon's. It's interesting to take a preliminary look at the Author's Note that precedes Miller's main text:

I would like to be able to thank the officials of the Church of Scientology for their help in compiling this biography, but I am unable to do so because the price of their co-operation was effective control of

the manuscript, and it was a price I was unwilling to pay. Thereafter the Church did its best to dissuade people who knew Hubbard from Speaking to me and constantly threatened litigation. Scientology lawyers in New York and Los Angeles made it clear in frequent letters that they expected me to libel and defame L. Ron Hubbard. When I protested that in thirty years as a journalist and writer I had never been accused of libel, I was apparently investigated and a letter was written to my publishers in New York alleging that my claim was "simply not accurate." It was, and is . . .

Although Ron comes across as a bit of an appealing rogue—and certainly as a solid pro, as a writer—he was always a manipulator, a parasite, a liar when it suited his purposes, and in general a user of those around him. Recounts of his activities in the years just after World War II, living with an LA-based gang of bohemians and science fiction fans including Alva Rogers and the late Jack Parsons, and experimenting with Aleister Crowley's brand of black magic and demonology, reads like a Robert Bloch horror story.

By contrast, Miller's recounting of the spectacle in which Hubbard announced the world's first "clear" and introduced her to a theater full of followers (and a few healthy skeptics, Praise the Lord!) is another exercise in farce that had me

rolling with laughter.

Later on, as Hubbard aged, there was a visible deterioration into megalomania and paranoia. Toward the very end of Hubbard's life he appears to have been badly disoriented, subject to fits of rage (and occasional fits of remorse), alternately abusing and using the sycophants who surrounded him, and being used by them as the symbol and source of wealth and power.

Certainly Miller's descriptions of Hubbard's "Messengers" (a description that goes far beyond Corydon's treatment of the same subject) has elements of tragedy, comedy, and outright farce mixed into a bizarre stew. Barely pubescent girls born and raised "in" Scientology surrounded Ron, catering to his every whim and acting as a sort of Praetorian Guard, isolating him from the rest of his followers, relaying his messages, bullying and abusing Scientologists in the Big Guy's name and even in imitations of his voice and patterns of intonation.

The whole thing reads like a wild yarn, a better and truer-ring-ing one than L. Ron Hubbard ever concocted. As Vincent Starrett once wrote of the late Howard Phillips Lovecraft, "He was his own greatest creation." And, at least in regard to L. Ron Hubbard, it might be added, his strangest. ●

—D. Cooper Vesco



WETWARE by Rudy Rucker

Avon Books, 1988, \$2.25

ISBN 0-380-70178-2

Geez, I swore I wouldn't use "rollicking" in this review; hamstrung, right from the start. Even avoiding an overworked and shopworn adjective, it's impossible to deny that this is an engaging and vivid book, written in a fluid, jargon-laden prose that, well, *trolics*. This is, of course, the welcome and expected sequel to *Software*, and like that novel, it deals with complicated and hilariously convoluted adventures in controlled evolution. I first read *Software* while on a white-knuckled trans-Atlantic flight; 1987 was an uncommonly uncomfortable year for flying, and even more so for your standard conventional landings. But *Software* helped a lot, and thanks to Rucker, the seven hour trip passed like

a mere six. I'm happy to say that *Wetware* inspires every bit of the same level of enjoyment so handy in any life-threatening situation. (Reads well in the living room, too.)

For those who somehow missed it, *Software* is the story of the aging Cobb Anderson, years after he liberated the first sentient robots from the onerous burden of the Three Laws of Robotics (those systems still under that programming are contemptuously regarded as Uncle Toms and are called "asimovs." Thus armed with open choice, the freed "boppers" are able to colonize the Moon—and then engage in a debilitating civil war. As this typical expression of free will is unfolding, Cobb is rescued from a gulag for aging freaks, or "pheezers," by a clique of grateful boppers who then run his brain patterns through a slicer/dicer, transferring the "software" that results to a robotic body. From meat to bop, Cobb is

granted immortality (and nostril-controlled inebriation), only to seemingly meet his tragic end as part of a dying Mr. Frostee truck.

(Does all this give you an inkling as to why the editor asked an underground cartoonist to review Rudy Rucker?)

In *Wetware*, the meat to bop theme is inverted, with no less originality and manic good humor. Some previous characters return—notably Sta-Hi Mooney, a burned-out loser now living on the Moon after making the same mistake Wm. S. Burroughs made with his wife. Cobb Anderson is resurrected, after spending ten uneventful years in a stasis cube tucked away on a shelf in some forgotten lunar storage closet. Humans have evicted the boppers from Disky, their former base, and have forced them into a precarious exile deep beneath the surface. Their only hope is to compete with humanity on a biological level, by outbreeding us with a combination of chip

and meat, or "meatbop."

Just how all this unfolds involves robots inspired by Michael Valentine Smith, Kerouac and Poe, a highly original (and improbable) drug, and a delightfully new and gruesome murder method, all told with a slangy, deadpan humor. It also involves more than I'd want to give away here.

Science Fiction has always benefited from a steady, small stream of humorists, most recently Douglas Adams and Robert Rankin. Rucker successfully competes with the best of them, avoiding slapstick to take science fiction and, with apparent ease, briskly renovate its traditional features. ●

—Steve Stiles

Steve is a well-known cartoonist whose vertical four panel insanities have been gracing our pages since the beginning. He insists that after 31 years of toiling in the SF vineyards, that this is his first book review.



ILLUSTRATION BY CHARLES BURNS

HARD-BOILED DEFECTIVE STORIES by Charles Burns

Raw/Pantheon, 1988, \$8.95
ISBN 0-394-75441-7

Charles Burns is one of the most interesting talents working in comics in this age of damaged ozone layers. His work looks old-fashioned and painfully modern all at the same time. A strong fifties influence pervades his drawings—everybody has big hair, hot rods, and some kind of physical deformity. The hero of this series of defective detective stories is a professional wrestler named El Borbuh, who never goes out of the house without his facemask and his Chesterfields. Nobody points at him in public—they wouldn't dare—instead, I believe, they secretly envy him his anonymity.

The five stories, including two serials, in this book represent Burns' idea of what the fifties would have been like if we had all been mutated by those distant Yucca Flats nuclear tests. His streets are filled with people with oddly shaped heads, demented brains and bad suits. They are drawn in a style so precise that it looks machine-made. The panels are lit like a strange bit of film

noire, and the dialogue is right out of Mickey Spillane.

In the hands of a lesser talent this would have been a messy stew of visual and written fragments. But Charles Burns controls his material with a half-nelson. In his hands the reader actually learns things about the characters and their environment. You can learn how El Borbah got that nasty scar on his shoulder, and why robots are a bad influence on our youth. You can find out the real reason why the Golden Arches have served billions, and much more.

You can also learn from this

book why Charles Burns may be the most important new comic artist since Moebius appeared in the seventies. This book is the most twisted bit of comic work I've seen in many years. If you are expecting Superman, you will be severely disappointed; if you are expecting *Raw*-style comics, you'll be a lot closer to the reality. The book was edited by Art Spiegelman and Francoise Mouly, the editors of *Raw*, and it reflects their view that comics is more than disposable tripe for twelve-year-olds. In fact, *Hard-Boiled Defective Stories* is collectable tripe for children of all ages. I know a ten-

year-old who loves this book, ("Boy, this is weird . . .") and a fifty-year-old who loves it ("This is what comics oughta be."). What more need be said?

Burns is also the author/artist of another *Raw* book called *Big Baby*, which came out in 1987, as well as numerous other projects (note the illustration of his we have used for the Greg Benford article in this issue). There isn't anybody else doing stuff this strange and this good in comics. This is top-of-the-line material, don't pass it up.

—djs

IN THE COUNTRY OF LAST THINGS by Paul Auster

Viking, 1987, \$15.95
ISBN 0-670-81445-8

Dunno guys, but if you find out, let me know. Another "stunning achievement" (uh-huh) in the parable-as-commentary genre, this SF-that-won't-admit-it details the adventures of one Anna Blume as she searches a devastated city (location unknown, but my critical acumen hints at NYC) for her reporter brother William, who has disappeared in the line of duty.

The first third of the book is pure exposition: apparently the author was so tickled by the chance to construct his very own Nowheresville that he just couldn't bear to stop tinkering and get on with the story. Once Anna finally begins her quest, detailed in the form of a letter to an unidentified recipient (another cute device that goes nowhere), we are exposed to a barrage of inconsistencies that just won't quit, and destroy whatever small appeal the book might hold.

Like what? Let me count the ways. First we are told that the streets are in such poor repair that even dragging a grocery cart, as Anna must in her job as an Object Hunter, is almost impossible; yet later Anna glides over these same streets in an "ancient Pierce-Arrow." According to Isabel, an old Object Hunter whom Anna befriends, "terrible things are happening to young girls all the time," yet luckily none of them happen to Anna. Later our heroine is engulfed by the "Terrible Winter" (as opposed to, say, the Tropical



Winter), but though fully one-third of the city's population succumb to popsicle-itis, "somehow or other, [Anna's] luck held out." When Anna encounters a food riot—one of many, she tells us—she escapes by ducking into the digs of the one man in the entire city who knows what happened to brother William, Sam Farr. Next she's out "food shopping" (in riot gear?) for the cozy twosome, who then must ration the luxury of razor blades, as tragically they must make a choice between his face and her legs. "The legs won hands down." and didn't you just know they would?

Street-smart Anna then goes on to fall for an incredibly transparent scheme to turn her into human hamburger, but *luckily*

escapes by dashing out a handy window, *luckily* not dying in the process, though she does lose the baby she is carrying (*luckily* for it). She recuperates at Woburn House, where, although none of the staff is at all medically competent, they *luckily* manage to heal Anna's broken ribs, broken arm, and miscarriage complications. While living at this halfway house (which sports—I am not making this up—a croquet field and a "large selection of lawn chairs") (and *you* thought the future would be hard!) Anna becomes a kind of anti-social worker, has a lesbian affair, reunites with Sam, zzzzzzzzz . . . oh, is it over? No: but the words've stopped. Yeah I know: be grateful for small favors.

The characters are bloodless cutouts, the philosophy laughable, and continuity, not to mention simple extrapolation from the author's own premise, is a hopeless dream. To compare this piece of posturing garbage to Anne Frank's *Diary*, as does the *Kirkus Reviews* piece quoted as a blurb, is like comparing a visit to Uncle Al's U-Skin-Em Gator Farm to a forced march through hell; the trivial mewling in the shadow of the terrible. Please pass the lye.

—Kathe Koja

Kathe was the author of "Professional Image" in our last issue. We have had a few complaints about negative reviews, and I agree that they can be cruel. But Kathe's acerbic piece perfectly illustrates one of the values of a negative review: the skewering of an overpraised book, "The Emperor is naked." For another reason for this kind of review, see Paul King's giant crab discussion.

They always did say that spring was a time for growth.

I had this whole "seed planting, flowers blooming" analogy worked out, but I'll spare you. The thing is, though, an awful lot of projects we've been working on for quite some time will be "sprouting up" in the next few months. Foremost among these projects is Foundation Books, the new cooperative venture between Doubleday and Bantam. The people who have been bringing you Spectra (along with some wonderfully talented people at Doubleday) will now be bringing you eighteen hardcover titles a year under the Foundation imprint. I could go on at length, but I think you'll get the idea of what we have planned for this program as you read on.

MAY: Our first Foundation book is a novel people have literally been waiting decades to read. **Prelude to Foundation** is the overture to Isaac Asimov's magnificent *Foundation* saga. Here, at last, is the story of Hari Seldon, father of the Foundation. The other Foundation hardcover this month is Parke Godwin's funny, irreverent and biting **Waiting for the Galactic Bus**. On the paperback side, we have a true embarrassment of riches (I hope you have *lots* of time set aside). Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman lead the way with their second *Darksword* novel, **Doom of the Darksword**. The action really heats up in this one. Then there's Richard Grant's absolutely stunning near-future fantasy, **Rumors of Spring**, for everyone who loves novels like **Little, Big** and **Mythago Wood**. And *then* there's Connie Willis's accomplished first novel, **Lincoln's Dreams**. We nearly had to increase the size of the book in order to list all of the rave reviews it received. **Brother to the Lion** is the sequel to Rose Estes's exciting prehistoric fantasy, *Saga of the Lost Lands*. And we'll be publishing three of Robert Silverberg's most powerful novels, **The World Inside**, **Thorns**, and **Downward to the Earth** in one volume entitled, well, **Three Novels**.

JUNE: Raymond E. Feist is a simply great storyteller, as anyone who has read his *Riftwar* Saga can attest. Janny Wurts has shown in novels like **Stormwarden** that she has an incredible talent for creating characters and complex situations. The two of them have gotten together to write **Daughter of the Empire**, and the result is the best of both along with some real surprises. It leads the Spectra mass market list this month. **Aces Abroad** is the fourth book in the *Wild Cards* series edited by George R.R. Martin. This time, the outrageous adventures take place in Europe. **Shrine of the Desert Mage** is Stephen Goldin's first volume in a thundering Arabian fantasy series, *The Parsina Saga*. Real edge-of-the-seat stuff. Speaking of stories that keep you on the edge of your seat, **The Web** by Thomas Wylde concludes Roger Zelazny's *Alien Speedway* in breathtaking fashion. And James P. Hogan's **Minds, Machines and Evolution** is much more than a collection of his best stories. It also includes essays on the science behind his fiction and some fascinating biographical insights. Stephen Spruill's **The Paradox Planet**, his latest Kane and Pendrake novel, is coming from Foundation.



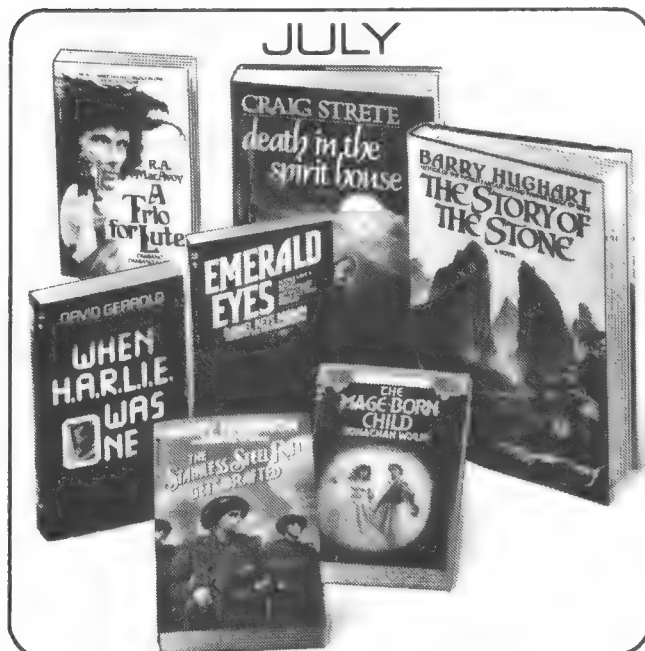
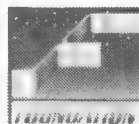
JULY: You never quite know how people are going to react. When I tell people that Foundation is publishing Barry Hughart's sequel to his World Fantasy Award-winning *Bridge of Birds*, *The Story of the Stone*, they really show their enthusiasm (one guy literally grabbed me and yelled, "I've been dying to read that novel." I'm making sure he gets one early). Also in July from Foundation is Craig Strete's chilling drama of Indian magic, *Death in the Spirit House*. On the lighter side (though this news also seems to cause hysterical reactions), Harry Harrison's *The Stainless Steel Rat Gets Drafted* will be out in paperback from Spectra. The title says it all, though, as usual, you'll never be able to anticipate what's going to happen. In the early '70s, David Gerrold published a groundbreaking novel of artificial intelligence called *When Harlie Was One*. A lot has happened in the field since then and Gerrold has now completely re-written this classic novel (only the characters and the most basic plot threads are the same) under the title *When Harlie Was One, Release 2.0*. Many of you have already discovered how terrific Jonathan Wylie's fantasy saga, *Servants of Ark* is. *The Mage-Born Child* is the final volume of the trilogy and it's quite a conclusion. Daniel Keys Moran made his debut earlier in the year with the highly praised *The Armageddon Blues*. In July, he's back with another knockout sf novel, *Emerald Eyes*. And if you haven't read R.A. MacAvoy's three "Damiano" novels, *Damiano*, *Damiano's Lute* and *Raphael*, you can correct this grievous error by picking up all three in one volume entitled *A Trio for Lute*.

AUGUST: Spectra still publishes hardcovers, too, and in August we have one a lot of people have been waiting for (I know I was), Harry Harrison's *Return To Eden*. Here the story begun in *West of Eden* and *Winter in Eden* comes to an incredibly dramatic close. Speaking of things dramatic, Foundation has Lewis Shiner's brilliant *Deserted Cities of the Heart*, a searing near-future novel about revolution, transcendence, and the possible end of the world as we know it. In paperback from Spectra comes Isaac Asimov's phenomenal *Fantastic Voyage II: Destination Brain* and the sf rock-and-roll novel, *Little Heroes* by Norman Spinrad. There's also the beginning of a sensational new fantasy saga created by Philip Jose Farmer, *The Dungeon*. The first title, *The Black Tower*, is written by Richard Lupoff and it introduces you to an incredible world of nightmare and wonder. Nightmares come in Joe Lansdale's *The Drive-In* as well. The subtitle says it all: "A B-Movie with Blood and Popcorn, Made in Texas."

Whew. I hope you enjoy yourself with this list. We had a great time putting it together. Have a wonderful summer.

Best,

Publisher, Bantam Spectra Books



THE MAKING OF THE ATOMIC BOMB by Richard Rhodes

Simon & Schuster, 1987, \$22.95 (hc)

ISBN 0-671-44133-7

Simon & Schuster, 1988, \$12.95 (pb)

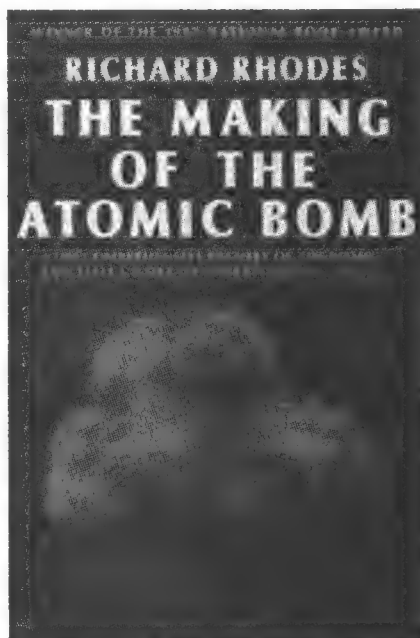
ISBN 0-671-65719-4

As the whole world knows, this book won the 1988 Pulitzer Prize for General Non-Fiction, making it a bit late for review. In any case, I'll pass along a few comments.

Roughly the first half of the book is a history of atomic physics and physicists. This portion focuses on the major discoveries that laid the groundwork for all of modern chemical physics and particularly the development of the atomic bomb. It also discusses the scientists who made these discoveries and the way they fed off each others various successes and failures. At this point an experiment might fail to support one thesis but could often be repeated to support another—the key factor was what the experimenter was seeking. Since the history of atomic physics begins with the twentieth century, a lot of detail is included here.

As the book progresses, the focus turns toward the making of the bomb. By the late 1930s, all of the major industrialized nations had atomic research facilities. Though the scientists were not at all sure that spontaneous nuclear fission was possible or that a bomb could be constructed, they were pursuing different means to this end. Being the unfortunate recipient of many refugee scientists from Europe, as well as its physical separation from WWII, the U.S. became the only country with the resources and ability to do work in more than one area. The secrecy that the scientists imposed on themselves did little to hide the fact of the U.S. atomic bomb project, the absence of papers from formerly prolific scientists spoke loudly in this regard, and established the environment of secrecy that persists to this day.

This is a great book. Though some knowledge of physics is useful, I heartily recommend this book both to those who would like to learn more about atomic energy and the scientific, philosophical and political issues surrounding the development of the atom bomb, and to those who know everything on the subject—or think they do. If by some chance you



have not yet picked up on this one, do so.

THE CURVE OF BINDING ENERGY by John McPhee

Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1974, \$7.95

ISBN 0-374-51598-0

After reading Rhodes, I decided it was high time to re-read John McPhee's book about Theodore B. Taylor in particular and atomic scientists in general.

Taylor doesn't enter the picture in *The Making of the Atomic Bomb* because he came into that picture just after the end of WWII. His fission work came at a time when fusion was the hot topic among the atom bomb crowd. Taylor focussed on fission and ended up designing many bombs that were more elegant than the crude affairs developed during the war.

The book is filled with anecdotes that illustrate the detachment with which some of the scientists view their work. For instance, there's the case of the atomic cigarette lighter. As he was preparing to test one of his new devices, Taylor took a small parabolic mirror and attached it to a clip that would hold a cigarette at the mirror's focal point. He aimed it at the bomb. When the bomb was set off, his cigarette was lit.

The book also illustrates how poor the security surrounding the handling of weapons-grade atomic fuels is and how little of this fuel is necessary for the construction

of a "device." The point here is that it would be relatively easy for a terrorist or criminal group to construct a very crude atomic bomb, by the standards of today, that could be used to destroy the World Trade Center.

This is another interesting and thought-provoking book. As with his other books, McPhee has packed a lot of information into this one without turning it into a terse recitation of facts. It is highly readable and well worth reading.

By the way, a followup article on Ted Taylor appears in McPhee's collection, *Table of Contents*.

KLAUS FUCHS, ATOM SPY by Robert Chadwell Williams

Harvard U. Press, 1987, \$25.00

ISBN 0-674-59597-7

Among the recently deceased is Klaus Fuchs, one of the more notorious characters to emerge from the commie-spy scares of the post-WWII era.

Fuchs was a German-born physicist who, following his seeking refuge in Britain, became a key member of the British atomic bomb project. When the British sent a group of their scientists to the U.S. to participate in the Manhattan Project, Fuchs was among them. His key roles, from the post-war perspective, was as an agent for the Soviet Union. In this role, he passed along many important facts concerning the design and development of the plutonium bomb and American fissile material production capabilities.

In addition to the widely documented parts of Fuchs' life, this book covers his family life, his scientific background, his (and his family's) open membership in various communist and socialist groups, the period of his work on the bomb, the means by which he maintained contact with other soviet agents, and his post-war activity on the British atomic bomb project much more extensively than elsewhere.

This was also quite a good book, though it will be of limited appeal to those who are not particularly interested in the subject matter.

—Paul King

Paul King creates software for a living. He last appeared in these pages with his insightful review of Pel Torro's groundbreaking novel, Galaxy 666.

LIMBO by Bernard Wolfe

Carroll & Graf, 1987, \$4.95

ISBN 0-88184-327-X

Limbo is not just a single book; contained within its covers are many books, operating on several different levels. Succinctly put, it's about ideas—philosophical, religious, psychological, sociological, political. Bernard Wolfe has distilled the essence of civilization to produce a fine wine with the kick of grain alcohol.

Many of the ideas explored seem to have resulted from the Vietnam experience. However, *Limbo* was written in 1952. Wolfe has also intuitively predicted the uneasy detente which has followed the Cold War. Weighty as some of his topics of discussion are, he successfully offsets them with a variety of experimental literary styles.

Unfortunately, Wolfe overuses the Platonic dialogue between the characters as Dr. Martine discovers the extent to which society has changed during his fifteen

year absence. This search for understanding is somewhat repetitive, and may lead to a degree of impatience in the reader. But this repetition is justified by the continual embroidery of ideas alluded to earlier in the book. For example, a doctrine of complete passivity through lobotomy is introduced via an exotic and completely foreign South Sea island society. This doctrine is both contrasted to the bizarre popularity of full-limb amputation (replaced by mechanical prostheses) in the mainland Euro-Western society, and linked to the West through the anti-war movement, and becomes, ultimately, a factor in the internal wars waged within one's skull.

Dr. Martine's existential dream sequences and internal thought processes are extremely effective. The insights encountered will strike anyone who has attempted to analyze their own perceptions of reality with a strange familiarity. *Limbo* exposes the thoughts suppressed just beneath

the surface in all of us.

Sadly Bernard Wolfe has remained obscure. This is his only science fiction book. His four other titles (listed opposite *Limbo's* title page) are long out of print. If *Limbo* is any indication of the author's talent, these other books deserve a reappraisal. Carroll & Graf deserve a commendation for rescuing for rescuing this book, and many other fine novels, from oblivion in their superb line based on David Pringle's *100 Best Science Fiction Novels*.

Overall, the ideas discussed in *Limbo* are fascinating. Once you realize that this novel was written thirty-six years ago, its impact becomes mind-blowing. *Limbo* is a classic in every sense of the word.

—Vance Anderson

Vance is the newest member of the *EYE* staff. He did one of the most tedious jobs we could foist off on him—doing the raw tape transcription of this issue's two interviews.

PHOENIX RESTAURANT

by Ferret

Fandom House, 1988, \$3.50

Ferret is an illustrator from San Francisco who has been popping up in the SF field for the last couple of years. He has illustrated a bunch of books by the likes of K.W. Jeter, James Blaylock, and John Shirley; as well as being associated with Matt Howarth's Howski Studios. *Phoenix Restaurant* is, to my knowledge, his first solo book, and it's probably not going to be his last.

His long association with Howarth—who writes the afterward here—has helped him and hindered him. It has helped him because he has picked up a lot of Howarth's artistic vocabulary and has exposed him to some of the dark corners of SF and comics that only Matt knows about. It offered Mr. Ferret an obvious opportunity to melt several influences—cyberpunk is an obvious one—into something akin to a Philip K. Dick coloring book, if you can imagine such a thing.

Howarth's influence has also worked against Ferret. As mentioned above, Ferret has adapted a lot of Matt's techniques and stylistic nuances, but unfortunately he doesn't do them nearly as well as Howarth. However, this doesn't

really seem to matter. Time will teach him how to handle differing styles of crosshatched texture and when to alter his perspective and point of view. There is obviously a lot of talent here and eventually he will leave the pseudo-Howarth style behind and move onto something less restrictive. I'm willing to bet that in five years he'll want to hide this book.

Not that it is a bad book, really. *Phoenix Restaurant* is just a little bit on the slight and pretentious side. What it lacks in plot it makes up for in oblique references and visual puns. This book isn't deep, but it has a lot of whimsy

and a hell of a lot of texture and detail. Each page presents one illustration and a sentence or two of text which leads the reader through a nightmare world of *Bladerunner* mixed with the *Post Brothers*.

Until you read this book, you'll never know food could hurt so much. *Phoenix Restaurant* is available by mail from:

Fandom House
P.O. Box 1348
Denver, CO 80201
—djs



ILLUSTRATION BY FERRET

TRUST ME ON THIS

by Donald Westlake

Mysterious Press, 1988, \$16.95
ISBN 0-89296-176-7

The October 1961 issue of *Galaxy* magazine contained a story called "The Spy in the Elevator," by Donald E. Westlake. At that time Westlake was a bright 28-year-old who was making a name for himself in the science fiction and mystery fields simultaneously.

Just a month later, in a fanzine piece*, Westlake thumbed his nose at the wonderful world of science fiction. He told off the editors then working in the field, and he neither pulled his punches nor disguised his targets. ("Campbell is an egomaniac . . . Mills of *F&SF* is a journeyman incompetent . . . Cele Goldsmith is a third grade teacher and I bet she wonders what in the world she is doing over at *Amazing* . . . And as for Pohl, who can tell?") Elsewhere in the article, Westlake told how he had sold "The Spy in the Elevator" to *Galaxy*, calling the piece a "silly insipid story," and stating that he wrote and sold it out of sheer cynicism.

The total message of Westlake's article was summed up in its title, "Don't Call Us . . . We'll Call You."

Fred Pohl was miffed by Westlake's remarks, and (along with several of the other people directly attacked or merely slighted in passing in the original article) penned a rebuttal, which appeared in the following issue of the same fanzine. Although written as a letter to the editor, it was published as a short article called, "How Westlake's Spy Got into *Galaxy's* Elevator." Not surprisingly, Pohl tore up Westlake about as bad as Westlake had torn up Pohl. Blood all over the walls, and intestines hanging from the chandeliers. Just the kind of thing fan

*I have to confess, the fanzine involved was *Xero*, and I was the fan editor who chortled in glee to see these pros ripping each other's bellies out in the pages of my fanzine. I remember vividly the Monday morning when my phone rang with a call from Westlake's then-agent, Henry Morrison. Apparently Don had just told him about "Don't Call Us . . . We'll Call You," and Morrison was beside himself.

"Is there any way we can stop this, pull it from the magazine?"

"No way," I told him, "Even if I wanted to pull it, I couldn't. The issue is already in the mail. We couldn't possibly track down and recover 300 copies."

"Oh my God," Morrison moaned, "Westlake has cut his own throat!"



editors love. Let's you and him fight, bro'!

Well, here it is the better part of thirty years later, and all I can say is, I sure as hell never want to make an enemy of Don Westlake. Because this puppy, he never forgets a slight. And just when you think it's safe to go back in the shower, there he is waiting to get you! Case in point: *Trust Me on This*.

In the years following "Don't Call Us . . . We'll Call You," Westlake pretty well kept his word about quitting science fiction. He did slip at least once, with a very bad pseudonymous novel in 1967 (*Anarchaos*, by "Curt Clark"), but for the most part he has stayed in the mystery field, scoring triumph after triumph in a number of different styles and under a number of different names (notably, Richard Stark and Tucker Coe). He is also a grizzled veteran by now, who has suffered through most of the miseries that authors are likely to encounter. He wrote some of these up in a novel called *A Likely Story* (Penzler Books, 1984). This is one of the most painfully truthful, yet hilarious books I have ever read. I recommend it highly to anyone who has ever had anything to do with the publishing world. You will alternately find yourself crying through your laughter and laughing through your tears.

All of which brings me to *Trust Me on This*.

The first thing that grabbed this browser's eye was the dust jacket art: a painting of a pair of white gloves pulling a tabloid paper from a magician's hat. The banner headline on the tab reads:

JOGGING CAUSES NYMPHOMANIA

and the logo on the tabloid, in red ink and a type style that will make an old science fiction fan's heart pitter-patter with nostalgia, reads:

The Weekly GALAXY

Is that enough for you? Don't quit on me yet!

A few chapters into the novel (I'm getting ahead of myself, but bear with me) we learn that the publisher of the *Weekly Galaxy* loves to spy on his employees. To do this, he has ordered his whole office—desk, chairs, telephone, filing cabinets, the works—built into an elevator. He rides up and down through the *Galaxy* building, and every employee knows that at any moment the sliding doors may silently open and bring him under the probing eye of . . . of . . . you got it!

Listen, this is obviously a dangerous man we're dealing with!

The book opens with a young journalist who has just left an honest but ill-paying job on a small-town paper arriving to take up her new duties at the *Galaxy*. Before she even reaches the office building, she stumbles across a corpse and we assume that this is the beginning of a murder mystery.

As quickly as the topic is introduced, however, it is forgotten, and for the next 250 pages or so, we have a whole other story. It's the inside workings of a weekly tabloid, the kind you love to browse through at the checkout counter of your supermarket, but wouldn't be caught dead buying. *Somebody* buys 'em, though, because these sheets have huge circulation figures and they positively coin money.

We get to follow young Sara Joslyn through the process of several *Galaxy* assignments, ranging from a birthday party for the oldest twins in the world to the wedding of a Michael Landon-type TV star who positively *hates* the *Galaxy*, to the funeral of a vaguely Johnny Cash-type country singer and ex-con.

Like *A Likely Story*, *Trust Me on This* is hilariously funny and has in

in my career, I've never worked for a paper like the *Galaxy* so I can view Sara Joslyn's suffering with a more detached retina.

This book is very, very funny.

Oh, almost as an afterthought, Westlake reintroduces the theme of that corpse that Sara found in the opening scene of the novel, in the closing scene. The

it the unmistakable ring of truth. For this reader, at least, it has the advantage (or disadvantage) of not striking *quite* as close to home as *A Likely Story*. I've had editors leave their jobs in the middle of a project, and I know the pain of Tom Diskant. Oy, do I ever! But although I have been both a print-oriented and a broadcast journalist

mystery is solved and the murderer is duly carted away by the cops, but the whole mystery aspect of the book is pretty perfunctory. It's really just a romp through the alleyways of sleaze-tabloid journalism, and I've got to tell you, I loved it.

—Richard A Lupoff

M31: A FAMILY ROMANCE

by Stephen Wright

Harmony Books, June, 1988, \$17.95

ISBN 0-517-56869-1

The news of imminent alien visitation, not as rapacious conquerors but wise and gentle teachers, cosmic saviors for the strung-out human race due to arrive from heaven in candy-colored mother-ships to disgorge their crew of otherworldly Buddhas and Jesuses, an image we all know from the films of Steven Spielberg, has grown so widespread, reinforced by long waits in the supermarket check-out line, that it has become easy—even for science fiction readers, who should know better—to dismiss the whole thing as nothing more than the amusing and/or pathetic ravings of delusioned crackpots.

And yet, despite the shabby media in which this message of unearned redemption—salvation from the stars—has been increasingly conveyed, there is a truth worth considering here . . . if not in the message itself, then certainly in the underlying imperative that drives it. It is on this deep level of mythic necessity that Stephen Wright works in *M31: A Family Romance*, his ambitious second novel (his first was *Meditations in Green*, a powerfully vivid, poetically surreal account of a young G.I.'s harrowing Vietnam experience).

Written in a masterful prose of luminous, lunatic intensity that left me breathless with admiration, *M31*—like Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* and Don DeLillo's *Ratner's Star*—makes adroit use of science fiction subtexts to give resonance to its portrait of the pathetic, crazed visionaries of a decaying civilization (in this case, late Twentieth Century America) in their quest for some new ritual or myth able to deliver survival and salvation. It is a primordial longing wrapped in today's technology.

But Wright's vision is far

closer in its essential aspects of truth and ugliness to David Lynch's *Eraserhead* and *Blue Velvet* than the sappy propaganda of Spielberg's comforting but fraudulent suburbias. For Wright, whatever its cloaking forms, its gaudy masks of illusion and delusion, the only redemption there is comes from inner space, and at a cost that we rational Twentieth Century Dittomen and women no longer value or even believe in, but that, like it or not, we shall sooner or later have to pay . . . with interest.

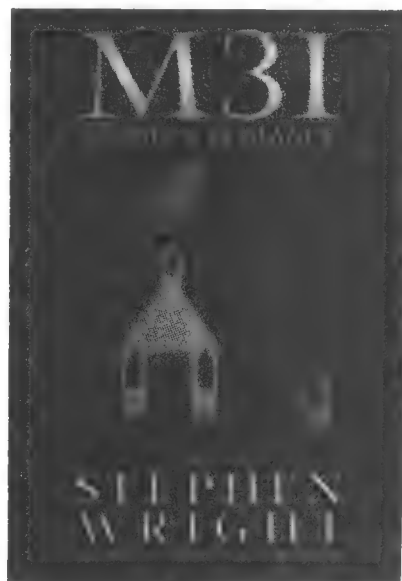
The story of that payment unfolds against the flat landscape of the American heartland: a parched, hallucinatory wasteland of nuclear silos, shopping malls, abattoirs and 7-Elevens, where UFO's are as much a part of the night sky as the constellations whose hoary shapes they sometimes mimic. There, outside the town of Albert, is a church of the old religion reconsecrated to the new, topped by the slowly revolving eye of a surplus radar dish instead of cross and steeple, the altar inside long ago dismantled and replaced by a home-made

flying saucer referred to only as The Object. Inside the church, a "family" of dubious relation (comparable in its incestuous tangle only to the progeny of Zeus) awaits the coming of the Occupants: benign extraterrestrial visitors and guides from the planet Etheria, located somewhere in the dusty sprawl of the galaxy Andromeda (M31 in Messier's terminology). This is the America of Philip K. Dick. Valisland.

Like comets accelerating to smack into the sun, the various members of this "family" trace their own eccentric orbits through the book's dark pages. And yet, despite the ugliness and horror, the episodes of random or calculated violence, the increasingly bleak and frenzied atmosphere punctuated less and less often by bursts of deranged hilarity or grim satire, the final impact of this thought-provoking book is somehow transcendent. Ultimately Wright is not attempting to "inoculate with despair," but, rather, in his own words, to look "into the night where all is born . . . and a fire without heat or light consumes in an instant the apparitions of this world . . ." Though written for a mainstream audience, the ultimate aim of *M31*—like the best science fiction—is not only to affirm the worth of human life and death, but also the grand destiny of our species on this planet . . . and beyond.

—Paul Witcover

Paul Witcover is the author of perhaps the single most disgusting and depressing short story this editor has ever read. "Ouroboros" currently languishes unpublished, and it's good thing. It is a measure of his talent that he was able to get such a rise out of me—an ironic turn of phrase, considering the nature of the story. Perhaps we might publish it some day, if our readership shows signs of a stronger stomach than the editors. In the meantime, we eagerly await more essay work from him.





FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN
by Terry Bisson

Arbor House, June, 1988, \$16.95
ISBN 1-55710-014-4

The best thing about Terry Bisson's much-praised first novel

Talking Man was its sure, sly, anecdotal style. That wizard's drive to the North Pole reads like a yarn told by your favorite Southern uncle. Yet from the dedication—to the Black Liberation Army—of Bisson's new novel *Fire on the Mountain*, it's plain that this uncle has more than just tall tales on his mind.

Bisson's no happier with the world today than anybody else, but unlike most people, he understands that it didn't have to turn out this way. History is made up of coincidence and mishap as much as anything else, only solidifying over time into the kind of dull monolith that breeds prejudice and despair. To illustrate his point, he's gone back to that fiery-eyed rebel John Brown, whose raids into Kansas and Virginia were believed by W.E.B. Du Bois to have precipitated the Civil War, and he's asked what if John Brown had succeeded? Bisson envisions a different war, with self-freed slaves pushing the white man back north across the Mason-Dixon line and

eventually founding a socialist state in the South. Extrapolating to Africa, he sees a continent united against European colonialists, which in the hands of Africans themselves grows in the Twentieth Century into the most powerful economy on Earth.

It's a different world, for sure, where herds of buffalo block traffic in the Virginia Piedmont, where blimps rule the air lanes, and orbital platforms are put to use manufacturing "living shoes" for children instead of laser weapons.

This is a winning fantasy, which Bisson has chosen to tell in interleaved chapters made up of the Nineteenth Century letters and memoirs of Brown's followers, and a domestic narrative about an astronaut's widow in this peaceful alternative Twentieth Century. In this way the reader can see the cause and effect as well.

It's sad that Bisson ultimately does neither side of the story justice. His retelling of the first days of Brown's raids reads as convincingly as any actual history,

DEADBONE EROTICA, Volume 2
by Vaughn Bodé

Fantographics Books, 1988, \$12.95
ISBN 0-930193-55-5

I have a deep link with Vaughn Bodé and the material in this book. Bodé was one of the most influential people in my development as an artist, and it gives me a great deal of vicarious pride to witness this publication. Vaughn's work deserves to be passed along to the current generation of readers because, as this collection proves, it is absolutely unique.

Bodé was in his late twenties when we met in 1970. I was an introverted fanboy/cartoonist/high school student who couldn't believe his good fortune when Vaughn consented to meet and talk about his cartooning. Despite our age difference, we had no trouble communicating. Vaughn was something of an innocent—he didn't perceive me as a threat, like so many others might. He accepted me as a friendly pest. I was thrilled.

Every time we met was memorable—often strange, but definitely memorable—and I learned much about the man, his

art and his troubles. He taught me that it was all right to be different and to strive to achieve something that is wholly your own. His influence was so great that I, in my quest for something wholly my own, spent several years drawing exactly like Vaughn—much to his distress. But eventually I did come into my own, and I owe him a tremendous debt of gratitude. Unfortunately, Vaughn Bodé died in 1975, and I never had a chance to say thank you.

Fortunately for all of us, Vaughn Bodé's work still lives on. We have Fantographics to thank for making it accessible once again.

The first volume of this collection was published in 1983 by Last Gasp Comix of San Francisco. Apparently they didn't have the resources to continue producing these expensive full-color collections of strips from the pages of *Cavaller* magazine, and the project fell by the wayside. For the next five years, we Bodé fans had to settle for some reprint comics of Cheech Wizard as our only hope of keeping his work and spirit alive.

Now, with the publication of

Volume 2 in the *Deadbone Erotica* series, I can watch again for a Bodé rediscovery. Hopefully the critics who snubbed him while he was still alive will take another look at these amazing examples of comic genius and see the light. The strips collected in this volume, and in its predecessor, are more than brightly colored lizards and ripe young women; they are Vaughn Bodé. He lived all these adventures, inhabited all these places, and fucked all these women. Vaughn Bodé's comic strips are completely in tune with who he was and wanted to be. This book is more than light-weight entertainment. It's a direct look into Vaughn's head.

Inside Bodé's head everyone is always horny, funny, hard, soft, sadistic, masochistic, confused, sexy, sad and alone. For those of us on the outside looking in, it is as entertaining as it can be. Agreed, you have to be willing to laugh at things morbid and perverse, but—considering the world around us—that isn't too tall an order.

This collection is a delight to look at. The printing is excellent and even those pages shot from

with Colonel Robert E. Lee's army resorting to terrorism and cannons in frustration as Brown and Harriet Tubman's soldiers fight a guerilla war out of their hidden bases in the Alleghenys. These Negro soldiers, sharp with a rifle, wiler than Lee's lieutenants, combat the notion underlying so many conventional American history texts, that the slaves needed U.S. Grant to free them. Without dwelling on the point too much, Bisson shows that this wasn't necessarily true. And in doing so, he deftly swats away racist preconceptions that have grown malignantly to this day.

It's fun to see those force-fed heroes of the history texts get their comeuppance. Even Abraham Lincoln takes his licks in this tale. But Bisson halts his narrative with the first skirmishes of the war. Having shown you the road not taken, you wish he'd take you further along it. You want to see how the world rearranges itself, and allusions to Mars probes, a Native American nation, and the primacy of chess pie do not go far

enough in explaining either how Brown's war resulted in such a different world or in describing that wonderful place. You want to hear more about "Nova Africa," about a Twentieth Century war hinted at throughout the book, and a tale that parses out to just 166 pages surely leaves room for a little more of that.

Bisson has succeeded, however, in reminding us of just how tentative history in the making really is, and in doing so he demonstrates how shaky are the foundations for many of our beliefs and motives. This is the subtle triumph of *Fire on the Mountain*. That he has tapped into a wish-fulfillment fantasy about a world at peace, where the profit motive has not been deified, reads like a dream come true. But it's a dream of which you long to hear more. ●

—Lynwood Gentry

Tony Gentry is a Virginia boy currently writing from the province of Manhattan. He is famed throughout the Deep South for his gorgeous backstroke.



ISLANDS IN THE NET
by Bruce Sterling
Arbor House, July 1988, \$18.95
ISBN 0-87795-952-8

Some readers swallow every hook, line and sinker a book throws out. An uppity reader refuses the bait, talks back and hopes to get caught in spite of himself. *Islands in the Net* will catch us all.

The globe-spanning action begins on the beach of Galveston, Texas in the year 2020, and concludes three years later. It's an optimistic version of a future in which holes in the ozone layer were only a Boomer disaster hype, the Greenhouse Effect hasn't happened, America's urban areas weren't destroyed by crack, and most fantastic of all—nuclear weapons have been Abolished. The Vienna Convention polices pre-millennium cold war spooks, and keeps terrorism in line. The developed world is a corporate network. The post-Boomer generation of the Net basks in the afterglow of imperialism, smugly innocent of responsibility for the consequences of pre-millennium horrors.

Africa has been written off as pure loss. Ravished for a thousand years by Eastern and Western powers, the continent (except for South Africa) is a biological and environmental disaster. It's the dump for pre-millennium killer tech.

Holes, snags and logjams

reproductions (instead of the original art) are good enough to not diminish the rest of the book. I do wish the cover had been designed better, and Jeff Jones' introduction is unfortunately short and oblique (hopefully Jeff will someday tell us his many stories about Vaughn, but until then this will have to do) but these are my only real criticisms. I also want to mention the fact that these are chronological compilations of Bodé's work, and as such offers the reader an excellent opportunity to witness the growth of Vaughn's talent.

Lastly, this collection contains one of my all-time favorite Bodé strips. This strip was the first time a comic ever gave me a hard-on, and it still does to this day. Anybody who cares to guess which one it is can write to me care of our P.O. Box. Winners will receive an autographed condom.

Needless to say, Vaughn Bodé's *Deadbone Erotica* is not for the wee ones. But between you and me, I think they'd enjoy it too. ●

—djs



ILLUSTRATION BY VAUGHN BODÉ

called islands challenge the Net's globalist security. Illegal data havens, the Grenadian Syndicate, the Singapore Island Bank and the EFT Commerzbank, are information pirates, product bootleggers, manufacturers and black marketeers of unregulated tech and dangerous substances. Like some readers, they're uppity too. Singapore illegally logs forests. "They'll just have to stop doing that," declares an associate of Rizome Corporation.

Video glasses are the novel's central high-tech image. The wearer and corporate headquarters can interface anywhere the Network reaches. They permit instant two-way communication, monitoring and recording whatever's in their field of sight and sound.

Laura Webster is the interface for the novel and reader. Since the action begins in 2020, and the central gadget is glasses, the reader has been invited to consider the accuracy of Laura's vision.

Who is she? Laura Webster is half of a perfect marriage, complete with perfect baby. She's blond and beautiful, brimful of intelligence. Most significantly, she's well-positioned in Rizome Corporation, to which she contributes her expertise in public relations and negotiation. The core of her identity is Rizome's corporate character.

What is Rizome's character

like? It calls itself an economic democracy, where no one is an employee and everyone does what needs to be done. But some, not Laura, always cook, and Laura is always part of deciding policy objectives. At its best the corporate character is short-sighted. At its worst Rizome can't recognize the anguish of the world's billions of non-Lauras. It can propose a takeover of what's left of the U.S. government, blind to any argument for the separation of capital and state.

I won't give away the plot, but the farther removed Laura gets from Rizome, the more interesting things get. Sterling gambled big making Laura's story the focus of the plot's revolutions, and Sterling won. She's the perfect provocation for backtalk about the values of the Net because she's a perfectly plausible representative of yuppied-out corporate banality. Sterling's written the high-tech commercial science fiction epilogue to the eighties.

Laura is boring, but the book is not. The author's imagination is so dense that his novel might have imploded without Laura's straightness of character bleeding off the heat.

The cultural web throws up an unexpected twist and turn every few pages. There's a sun block that turns white skin black. Laura's husband loves it. He can play black on the outside without changing the inner man.

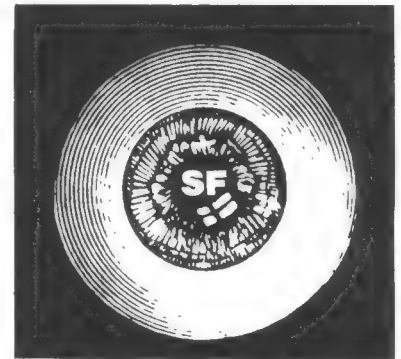
The action is astonishing. Events cascade over the pages—an astounding biotech assassination, a revolution, a refugee boat, a nuclear sub—you get the idea.

Science fiction jokes and homages bounce like balls off the boundaries of the plot. A terrorist group is called F.A.C.T. An empty swimming pool gapes next to a decayed tropical mansion. A Polish cadre named Andrei Tarkovsky lectures. Tuareg nomads plant grass in desertified Africa.

What distinguishes *Islands in the Net* from most science fiction? Other readers will have their own answers. For me it was the sophisticated use of a character who could have been a cliché. Imitators beware. You can't rip out a book like this in six months.

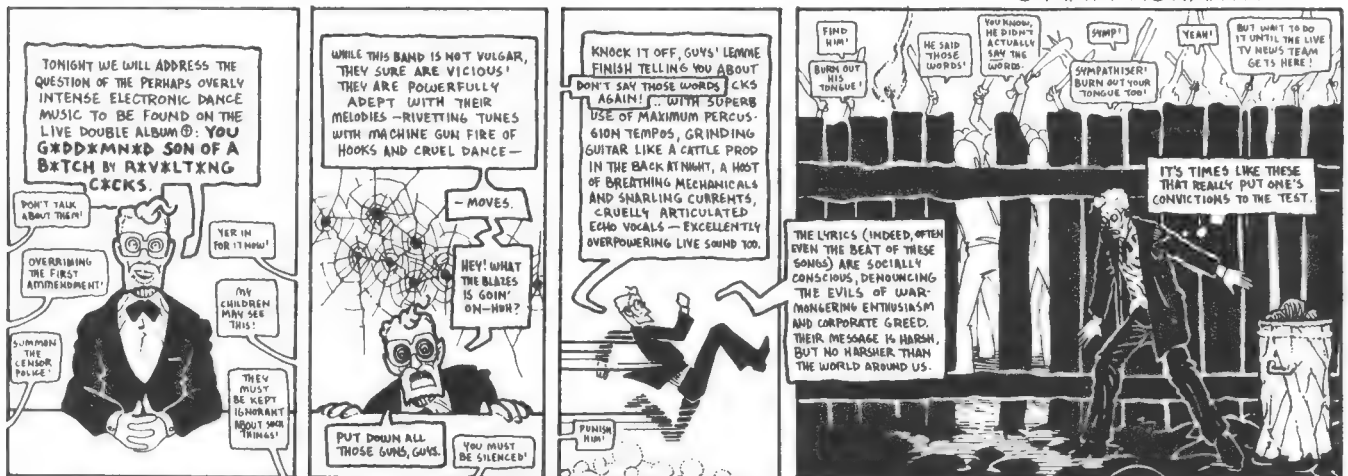
—C. Ash

Constance Ash lives deep in the heart of New York with her remarkable husband, Ned Sublette.



SONIC CURIOSITY

© MATT HOWARTH



© ON WAXTRAX RECORDS. AVAILABLE IN STORES OR CONTACT 2445 N LINCOLN AVE., CHICAGO, IL 60614

MONA LISA OVERDRIVE

by William Gibson

Bantam, 1988, \$17.95

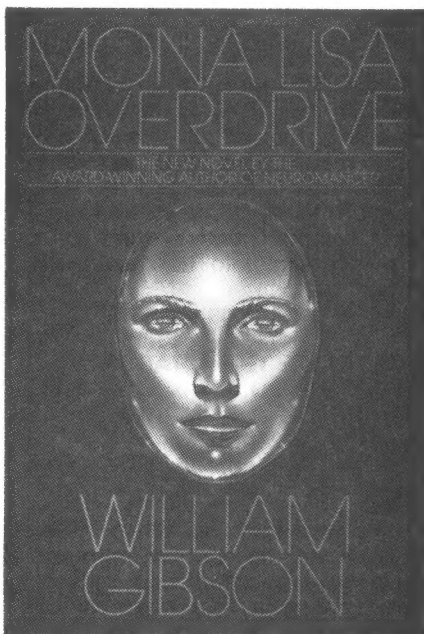
ISBN 0-553-05250-0

By now you will have heard a great deal about this book. It will have been reviewed, discussed, analyzed, deconstructed and vivisectioned until the juice has been squeezed out of it. You already know this is the third and final novel in Gibson's *Sprawl* trilogy, following *Neuromancer* and *Count Zero*. The sheer size of Gibson's popularity and notoriety attracts critics like death attracts vultures.

So I won't tell you anything about the story, you'll probably want to read that yourself. Suffice to say that this is, indeed, a fitting conclusion to what Gibson started in *Neuromancer*.

Gibson is still developing as a writer. He said, not too long ago, that he had no idea how to write a novel. *Count Zero* is a better book than *Neuromancer*. He learned from his mistakes. *Mona Lisa Overdrive* is a better book than either. He is still learning from his mistakes.

One of Gibson's mistakes at the start of his career was a lack of lucidity. It is his natural talent that he is able to make the incomprehensible *seem* like it should be comprehensible, if only you and I were just a little bit brighter. "Daz-



zling them with footwork" was his term for this. This is why his Japanese imagery was taken to heart by the Japanese themselves, though Gibson had never been there. This is why MIT computer scientists took to heart his cyberspace jargon, though he wrote *Neuromancer* on a portable typewriter, and got everything he knew about computers from his imagination, and impressions formed from Apple ads, conversations, the news, and (for all I know) his

microwave oven's operator's manual—though he has since acquired a PC and joined the Eighties along with the rest of us.

Gibson has been learning how to be lucid, and in *Mona Lisa Overdrive* he has achieved it. Where he was confusing but fascinating before, he is now intelligible and fascinating.

In tandem with lucidity, he has learned the secret of dragging the reader from page to page without mercy. Once you are a few pages into this novel, you will find it very difficult to pause and sleep or eat.

Mona Lisa isn't as flashy as its predecessors, but it's a better book. The prose is smooth and liquid and quietly compelling. The characters run deeper and have solidified more. All the trademarks are still there; the shifting viewpoints, the illuminated minutia of today's society, cyberspace, the Finn. All the reasons for the cyberpunk rhetoric are there, but that's just the foam on the beer.

The only thing you really need to know about this novel, is that you will have a helluva good time reading it.

Oh yeah, I will tell you one little thing, in case you were wondering—"Mona Lisa Overdrive" is *Sprawl* slang for female orgasm. ●

—spb

THE FLIGHT OF THE IGUANA

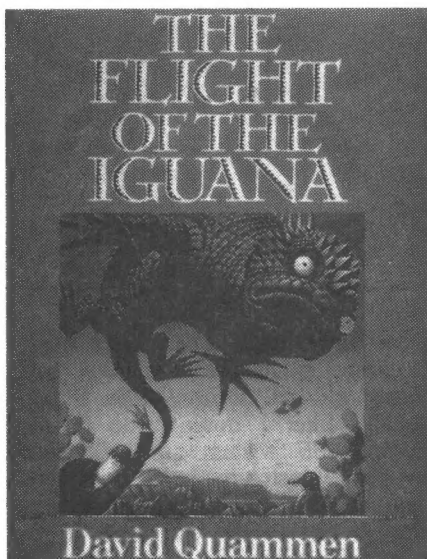
by David Quammen

Delacorte Press, 1988, \$17.95

ISBN 0-385-29592-8

This collection of essays is subtitled "A Sidelong View of Science and Nature." "Sidelong" it certainly is. This is a rowdy, funny and, every so often, just a little bit profound book. Quammen's short essays focus on odd little aspects of the natural world. He entertains and informs you, then pulls the rug out with a brief dose of the thoughtprovoking—check out the essay on why the Canada Goose is monogamous, and you'll see what I mean.

There are dozens of little marvels herein, such as the opening essay, which describes a Black Widow spider hatchery in full force on Quammen's desk, and "... fifty or sixty of them had reached the lampshade and rappelled back



down . . . others had already managed dispersal flights, letting out strands of buoyant silk and ballooning away on rising air . . .

And the question was, How should a human behave toward the members of other living species?"

Quammen behaved with a can of Raid, in this case, but his question occasioned some thought, both in the author and the reader.

It is a book filled with wonders, from the Crown-of-Thorns Starfish that is devouring the coral reefs, to the terrifying sexual habits of a certain species of buedbug. But my favorite is the Chambered Nautilus and its siphuncle. This is a long tubular organ which passes through each of the sealed-off chambers of the Nautilus, and either replaces water with gas, or replaces gas with water in an intricate, submarine-like act of precision buoyancy for controlled ascent and descent.

We all need a siphuncle, but we'll have to settle for David Quammen's fascinating book. ●

—spb

KILLER CRABS

by Guy N. Smith

NAL/Signet, ca. 1978, \$1.75

Out of print

Horror can take many forms. There are traditional horrors: ghosts, werewolves, vampires, zombies and the like. There are modern horrors: giant ants, pods from outer space, mutants and evil scientists. There are Lovecraft's unspeakable beings and nameless horrors of pre-human times. Then there are the horrors to be found in giant crab books: dumb ideas, poor plotting, gratuitous sex scenes, and characters as deep as the stereotypes from which they are drawn. Although I didn't study it closely, this book at least seemed to be grammatically correct.

The book begins with a Norwegian fisherman who finds a very large and menacing crab in his net. Realizing that this is something new and terrible, he wants to be sure to contact the authorities upon his return to port. Unfortunately, he suffers from a congenital heart condition and dies in his sleep from a heart attack; so his secret dies with him. What a coincidence!

From here we move down the years and around the world to a luxury resort off the northern shore of Australia. We learn, as the resort has been systematically attacked by giant crabs, that there had been a horrendous crab attack on the holiday resorts along the coast of Wales some years previously. In the prior attack, no amount of military firepower had been of any value, but eventually all of the crabs, except the "King Crab," were killed with paraquat. That "King" must have been a

"Queen," because here again we have a horde of giant crabs endeavoring to kill off the denizens of a resort. This time around the crabs are done in by being cooked to death. But wait, again the "Queen Crab," blinded by the fire, escapes into the ocean. The end.

Which brings me to . . .

ORIGIN OF THE CRABS

CRAB'S MOON

CRABS ON A RAMPAGE

by Guy N. Smith

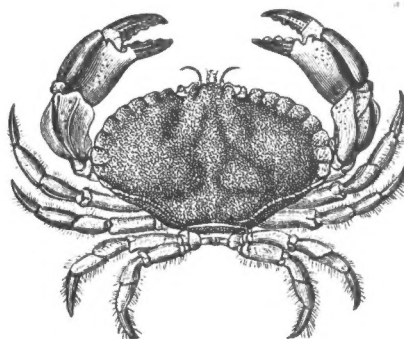
Dell, late 70s or early 80s, \$3.50 each

Out of Print

Does Guy N. Smith have a fetish? Did he, as an impressionable youth, suffer food poisoning after eating a bad batch of Crab Rangoons? Whatever the reason, he appears to be a man dedicated to the notion of carrying a joke too far.

In the tradition of *Killer Crabs*, we have dumb ideas (the same dumb ideas, as it turns out), bad plotting, and complete sentences.

In *Origin of the Crabs* and *Crab's Moon*, the author writes of



the crab attack on the Welsh coast that he mentioned in *Killer Crabs*. The most remarkable characteristic of these books is the author's creation of a series of uninteresting characters whose only purpose is to indulge in sexual activities and then get mauled by crabs. The second book ends after the successful attack on a holiday camp, but contains a post-script mentioning that the scientist did manage to defeat the crabs—no mention is made of the means by which this feat was accomplished.

Remember how, at the end of *Killer Crabs*, that wily Queen Crab managed to escape yet again from those who would destroy her and put an end to her race? Guess what? That's right, she's back! And boy, is she mad! Here we have the usual parade of stereotypical characters that are hastily introduced and then hacked to bits by demonic giant crabs. This time, though, the crabs are indulging in a orgy of self-destruction in addition to their sadistic mauling of Britons. The last book really wraps things up. Smith brings back every surviving protagonist from the earlier books, without introduction, in order to have each confront the monsters one final time. He indulges in an orgy of violence, culminating in the death of all the crabs.

—Paul King

This is one of the other reasons for publishing negative reviews mentioned earlier—sometimes they're simply funny. Now, c'mon, don't you think the sheer concept of someone writing not one, but four novels about invading giant crabs isn't just a little bit humorous? Oh well, I guess some people take their fiction without any salt at all.

DATLOW

Continued from Page 65

that is for someone completely unknown. Just be persistent is the best advice that I can give.

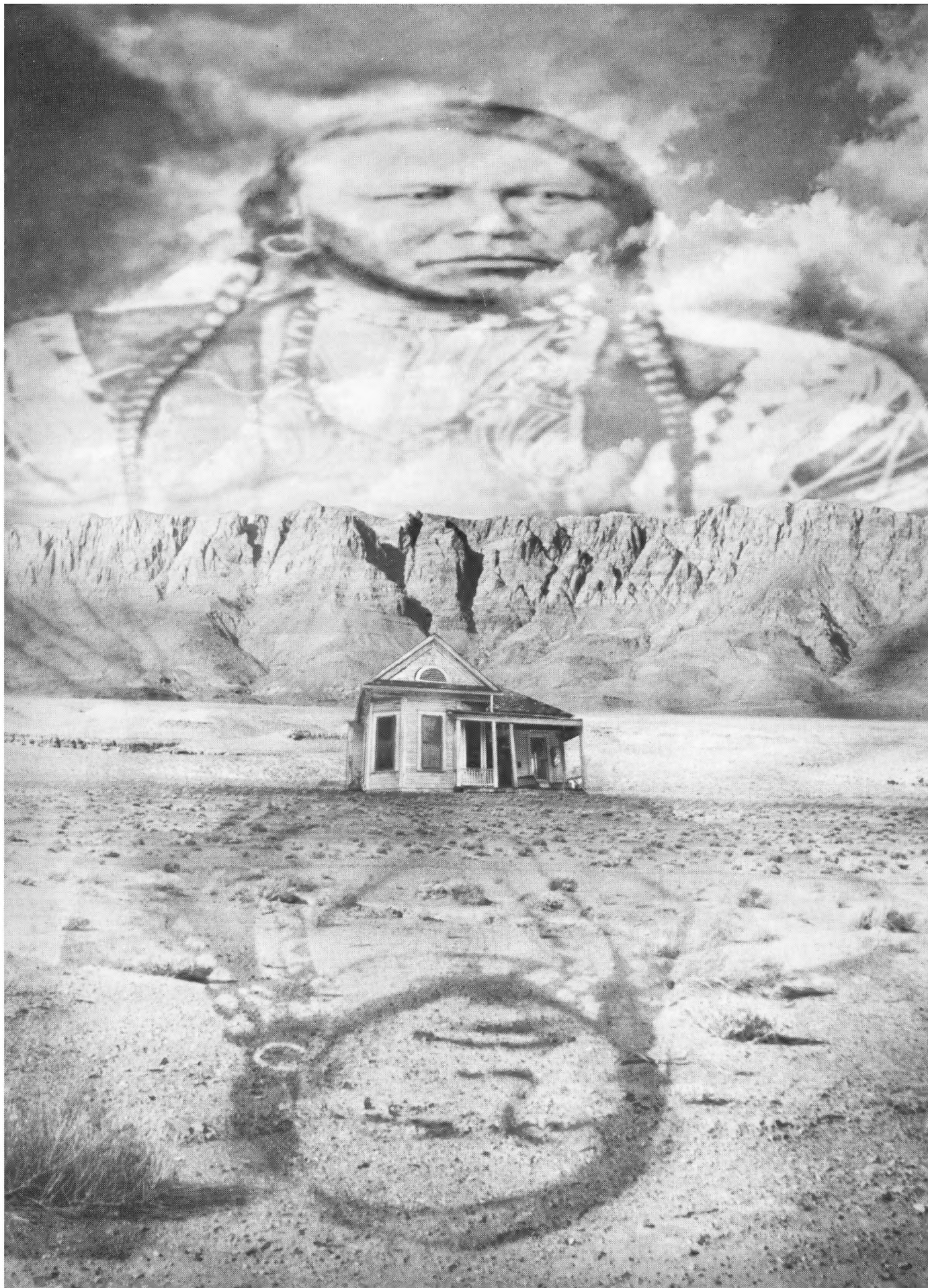
Another piece of advice, don't read just science fiction. Read all kinds of fiction. Read non-fiction for research. You want stimulus from all kinds of material. Most of the best writers are influenced by all kinds of writing, by fiction, by

what they read when they were children, mainstream writers, and those odd-ball writers who I personally like. I think some of my favorite SF writers are influenced by the mainstream and I think you can reach a larger audience that way, if that's what you want. If you want a little science fiction fan audience, then, yeah, just read science fiction your whole life. But that's not where its at. That's boring and your stuff is going to get bor-

ing. You should take it all in, read as much as you can of everything, and use it. Read psychology, read Jung, read Freud, use it somehow, even subliminally. It's great. That's where you get your stimulus from.

BRYANT: Why don't you buy more of my stuff?

DATLOW: You have to write more of it. I buy almost everything you send me.





**WILLIAM GIBSON, RICHARD A. LUPOFF,
PHILIP K. DICK, LUCIUS SHEPARD,
JOHN SHIRLEY, CLIVE BARKER,
BRUCE STERLING, GREGORY BENFORD,
RUDY RUCKER, SAMUEL R. DELANY, CHARLES
SHEFFIELD, PAUL DI FILIPPO, TED WHITE,
LOU STATHIS, ED BRYANT, RICHARD KADREY,
IAN WATSON, J.K. POTTER, ELIZABETH HAND,
JOHN KESSEL, MATT HOWARTH, PAUL
WILLIAMS, STEVE STILES, TAKAYUKI TATSUMI,
STEPHEN P. BROWN, DAN STEFFAN & MORE.**

Make checks payable and mail to:

**Science Fiction EYE, Box 43244,
Washington, D.C. 20010-9244, USA**

- ☐ I'm curious, send me 1 year for \$10/\$15.
- ☐ I'm confident, send me 2 years for \$18/\$27.
- ☐ I'm cheap, send me more information.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

ALL NEW

**One year (*three issues*) for only \$10.00
(\$15.00 Overseas)**

**Two years (*six issues*) for only \$18.00
(\$27.00 Overseas)**

Please make payment in US dollars.